

**ALIGN AND CRUMBLE:
INTERNALLY FALLING TOWARDS AUTHENTIC BEHAVIOUR IN ACTING AND AN
INVESTIGATION OF ANTON CHEKHOV'S THREE SISTERS**

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate how to internally fall towards authentic behaviour and apply this means to the preparation and performance of the role of Doctor Chebutykin in Anton Chekhov's *Three Sisters*. The primary area of exploration will be to channel full body awareness by releasing the pelvic bowl and stimulating the enteric nervous system. Areas of investigation include Philip Shepherd's *New Self New World: Recovering Our Senses in the Twenty-first Century*; Moksha Yoga practice and application; Erika Batdorf's approach to interoceptive awareness and emotional connection; Paul Lampert's twenty-six questions to character development; Kristin Linklater's progression of vocal exploration and warm up; Allyson McMackon's teachings of Grotowski's river work; and Sage Willow's coaching of American Sign Language. The thesis will contain supporting research including research and analysis of Russian history at the turn of the twentieth century, the Moscow Art Theatre, Chekhov and his play *Three Sisters*, the character of Doctor Chebutykin, as well as some performance history. It will conclude with a selection of journal entries from the rehearsal and performance of the production.

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1. INTRODUCTION: ARTISTIC CHALLENGE

In a Stanford commencement speech in 2005, Steve Jobs stated,

"You can't connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backward. So you have to trust that the dots will somehow connect in your future. You have to trust in something — your gut, destiny, life, karma, whatever." (Jobs, "You've Got to Find...")

As an artist, the impact of this quote resonates with me on a deep and sophisticated level. While I was living in New York City, I relished in the career highs I achieved on Broadway; however, I still felt empty inside, as if there was more of me to give and explore. This gut instinct became a driving force to creating a forward footprint in my artistic journey. My calling for graduate study was clear. In my statement of purpose to Professor Michael Greyeyes, I declared: "I am intrigued with the physical body and how actors can use movement to create sounds and shapes, which streamline emotional breakthroughs, and thus define and support the characters they portray" (Rossoff, "Statement of Purpose"). During my first year of training at York University, my professors were adamant that in order for me to develop and nurture a healthy actor body, I must strip down the work, the structure, and the ideas in my mind that I thought created a prolific artist and instead, reveal the heart of the internal journey. This training has been one of the most challenging, soul-searching, and questioning processes I have ever put myself through. I have always set high expectations for myself and through consistent hard work and dedication, have been fortunate enough to experience some extraordinary accomplishments and dreams come true. However, without actually being fully present in so many of these moments, I missed truly experiencing these achievements for all I thought they would be.

In Philip Shepherds, *New Self, New World: Recovering our Senses in the Twenty-First Century*, he describes the idea of internally falling:

If you sit quietly, for instance, and become passive to every single sensation and stirring of energy in the body, and give it your attention because it is, after all, part of you at this moment, you will find that the more passive you can become to what is happening, the more deeply you will fall into the universe that is your being. And it does indeed feel like falling, because when the scaffolding of the 'known self' is allowed to drop away, and your awareness opens to the living interplay between the two skulls, there is nothing to hold on to and only the flowering companionship of the present in which to rest. Your willingness to drop into the unfurling present is what enables you to find your way to the core necessity of your being: you are lost and found all at once, informed by the sensational stirrings of the eternal moment. (Shepherd 94)

Shepherd's concept of internally falling started to become a running theme in feedback and assessments from my professors. I have made it my objective to investigate this idea and how I can bring it into my work. To begin with, I questioned what vulnerability, or the periodic pattern of protection, costs me as an artist. Exploring this lead me to further question who I am, both as an actor and as a human, and how I can deepen my work on a cellular level to reveal honest and truthful behaviour under imaginary circumstances. Subsequently, at the core of this research, I will investigate what it means to fall internally.

In the Theater @ York 2016-17 season, I will be portraying the role of Doctor Ivan Chebutykin in Chekhov's *Three Sisters*. When Michael Pennington discusses *Three Sisters* in *Chekhov's Three Sisters*, he writes that "the initial impression of Chebutykin is of an eccentric and lovable uncle"(179). Chekhov evolves this character to become "detached from [his] affairs" (Caputi 385) and cynically "cut[s] himself off from life" (Pennington 19). As an actor, how does one explore this

emotionally turbulent and unstable journey to perform the role in the most authentic and truthful way possible? It is through my artistic challenge research of releasing the pelvic floor [specifically the perineum] that I will be able to internally fall within my body in order to portray the complex role of Chebutykin. I will do this by activating my emotional life through enteric nervous system awareness. The enteric brain is a "built-in biological system to keep us on the path to health and higher consciousness or awareness" (qtd. in Shepherd 79). I will also utilize techniques of full body interoceptive sensory awareness [access to involuntary systems] as a gateway to align my energetic actor body.

To begin this journey, I will start with the primary source: me. My family lineage began in Russia, and so I chose to explore my ancestral body with the hopes of creating a personal connection to Chebutykin. I spoke with my mom about our family history and she gave me a 200-page memoir of my great-great-grandfather, Aron Donner. He documents his journey of migration from Simferopol, Russia to Kenora, Winnipeg in Canada in the early 1900s. In Russia, this was also a vibrant time for theatre as the opening night of *Three Sisters* was on January 31, 1901 at The Moscow Art Theatre (Rayfield, *Anton* 525). In a time when Jews, like Donner, were punished for economic success and prosperity, he embodied the role of 'the seeker' and travelled throughout Egypt, Turkey, Palestine, back to Russia, and eventually to Canada to provide for his family (Donner 113). Reading this particular migration journal and learning about the extreme stressors that Donner experienced, both emotionally and financially, leads me to understand how he was put in survival mode. When I read about his journey from Russia to Canada I came to understand

that Donner was functioning with a locked pelvis and compressed sacrum. This physical response was necessary for him to deal with the emotional turmoil he endured as a result from being separated from his family and being oppressed by his government. In order to survive, Donner cut himself off from his emotional body.

When comparing Donner's energetic body to Chebutykin's, there are both similarities and contradictions. In Donald Rayfield's, *Chekhov: The Evolution of His Art*, the author writes that Chebutykin calls himself a migratory bird too old to fly. He further describes, "it is an image first of transient generations in the history of man and then of stranded humanity in a hostile world" (217). Donner and Chebutykin, although faced with different circumstances, have the same physical response: a locked pelvis. Donner locked his pelvis in order to remain resilient through his journey, while Chebutykin's cynicism and complacency resulted in detachment from his body. Once I became aware that these stories are rooted in my own cellular DNA, I deepened my exploration of pelvic floor awareness in the studio, as well as through practical life experience.

This summer, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to travel to St. Petersburg, Russia. Although *Three Sisters* takes place in an undisclosed Russian provincial town, I was able to energetically source out a cultural ethos. While in St. Petersburg, I toured the city's canals and channels by boat, which is the reason why current residents refer to St. Petersburg as the Venice of the North. I visited The Cathedral of Spilled Blood, the Hermitage Museum, as well as The Maly Theatre of St. Petersburg, which produced a critically acclaimed production of *Three Sisters* in

2010. Due to its success, Lev Dodin, the director, transferred this production to the Brooklyn Academy of Music in 2012, as well as Emerson Arts in 2015. I will be analyzing this production in the dramaturgy portion of this document through its reviews.

1.1 Falling Into the Pelvic Floor

A major component to addressing my artistic challenge vis-à-vis portraying the role of Chebutykin will be deeply rooted in exploring an energetic open channel in the pelvic bowl. Shepherd states, "It's in the head that we consciously think; it's in the pelvis that we can consciously be" (71). The awareness I cultivate will become the driving force of discovering authentic behavior. Shepherd asks three fundamental questions: "How do we unlock the mind's sensitivity to that task? How do we unite it with 'what is'? [And lastly, how] do we unlock the spaciousness of the corridor and awaken to the female aspect of our consciousness?" (90). The binary application of masculine and feminine energies are comprised of "the male element ... associated with doing ... [whereas,] the female element is associated with being" (Shepherd 17). In order to be fully present and in tune with tapping into feminine internal sensation and impulses to produce authentic behavior, I must find the balance of masculine ego and feminine consciousness in my work.

For some context, from the time I put on tap performances in my driveway as a young boy, to dancing on the Stratford Festival stage, I have had rigorous training and experience in music theatre; sending my energy out to the audience. After receiving constructive criticism from my professors at York University that I lack a

sense of authenticity and vulnerability in my acting work, I assessed my process and began my exploration inward. Now, the focal point in my investigation is the antithesis to that, knowing I need to unlock my pelvic region [perineum, iliac psoas, and sacrum] in order to internally fall. To achieve this crumbling sensation, I will have to become mindful of opening my pelvic floor and initiate my behaviour from the enteric brain, in essence, my belly brain. In Michael Gershons *The Second Brain: The Scientific Basis of Gut Instinct and a Groundbreaking New Understanding of Nervous Disorders of the Stomach and Intestine*, he discusses the belly brain process. When it chooses, the belly brain processes the sensory receptors data it picks up and activates a set of effectors that it controls (Gershon 17). Professor David Smukler describes this area of transformative organs as being the source an actor can tap into for emotional life. Shepherd discussed that, in 1907, the American physician and anatomist Byron Robinson published an opus that summarized much of his life's extensive research: *The Abdominal and Pelvic Brain*. Robinson writes:

In the cranial brain resides the consciousness of right and wrong; however, in the abdomen there exists a brain of wonderful power maintaining eternal, restless vigilance over its viscera ... The abdominal brain is not a mere agent of the brain and cord; it receives and generates nerve forces itself ... It is the center of life itself. (Robinson 69)

To feel the vibration and resonance of my internal sensations, the idea of discovering the balance of hard and soft, rigor and ease, as well as the masculine and feminine energies as a whole body experience became imperative. In my effort to further explore this process, I sought out Philip Shepherd, an expert on embodiment and wholeness. In a conversation we had, we discussed the idea of relinquishing

control as integration of the self, and becoming whole. He stated that wholeness does not tolerate division; all you can do is surrender to it. Once surrendered, you can be no other than a risk taker, compassionate, and courageous. This integration is a mindful action that occurs within the pelvic bowl. I found this fascinating! Pelvic intelligence organizes and integrates ideas, images, and emotions into a whole state of being. If we forget what integration is, we systemize and manufacture our experiences (Shepherd, “Discussing the Fall”). Aligning this concept to my acting work means honouring the body as a whole as an emotional gateway. When I can align this inner awareness, my authentic behaviour will be a product of releasing and allowing my belly brain to ignite emotional experiences.

1.2 Falling Through the Mat

Now that I have contextualized the theory behind internally falling, it was time to move into the studio. My initial studio work in exploring the pelvic region combined my practice of yoga with the idea of internally falling. I completed a thirty-day moksha yoga challenge where I set an intention to honour the releasing posture of *savasana* [corpse pose] within the rigor and flow of each position and transition. I became sensitive to the sensations of releasing tension. During these moments of high muscle activation, I assessed and documented my level of pelvic floor/perineum release and awareness of my internal sensations, as well as my emotional and energetic responses. In my journal, I detailed what resonated within my body and mind throughout the thirty days (*see Appendix A*). I discovered that the more I allowed myself to find the softness and clarity within each pose, I was

able to release my pelvic floor, endure the intensity of the exploration and hook up my lower chakra system. Shepherd explains, “chakras constitute a series of energy centres in the body... the first and deepest of the chakras is located on the pelvic floor ... the anus, the perineum and the genitals (78). This chakra alignment and suspension is most prominent on Days 12, 20, and 30.

While in practice, one of my yoga teachers and co-author of *Heart Yoga: The Sacred Marriage of Yoga and Mysticism*, Karuna Erickson, continuously placed her fingers alongside the insteps of my feet to bring awareness to my collapsing inner arches. Raising my inner arches produced a ripple effect to my archway alignment. Archway alignment is when the practitioner brings awareness to their inner arches of the feet, which engages the arch of the pelvis, the diaphragm arch, the soft palate arch, and the arch of the cranium. This blew my mind! I discovered that a way into the fall, I had to energetically lift, align, and suspend my anatomy for my perineum to fully crumble internally. Along with honouring this alignment set up, for me, as I gave permission to my pelvic bowl to open, my sacrum unlocked, my shoulder girdle spread wide, sternum softened, and I found the lift of my occipital bone. I felt like I was ten feet tall!

To achieve such subtle adjustments throughout the body and specifically in the pelvis, one must have a healthy spine. In *Pelvic Power: Mind/body Exercises for Strength, Flexibility, Posture, and Balance for Men and Women*, Eric Franklin states, "through loosening the spine, one can immediately make the pelvic floor more flexible and thus have a greater training effect. The opposite is true as well: a flexible pelvic floor improves the flexibility of the spine" (24). The image that kept

forming was raising the sails of a tall ship and allowing the wind to maneuver and guide the course with ease.

1.3 Stanislavski on Yoga and Prana

Initially, Konstantin Stanislavski rooted his training in the vital spiritual energy source of *prana* [breath], initiated from the solar plexus (Whyman). For a detailed description of *prana*, Yogi Ramacharaka offers this definition:

[Prana is] a universal principle, which principle is the essence of all motion, force or energy, whether manifested in gravitation, electricity, the revolution of the planets and all forms of life, from the highest to the lowest. It may be called the soul of Force and Energy in all their forms, and the principle which, operation in a certain way causes that form of activity, which accompanies Life. (Ramacharaka 158)

By deepening this awareness, *prana* can support the discovery of an actor's emotional preparation by allowing the flow of energy to affect the exploratory work.

Rose Whyman quotes Stanislavski in *The Stanislavsky System of Acting: Legacy and Influence in Modern Performance*. She makes a connection and differentiates

between the mind and chakra energy centres. Stanislavski states:

As well as the center of our nervous psychic life, the brain, there is another center near the heart where the solar plexus is. I tried to establish communication between the two centers I have mentioned. ... [T]he head center seemed to me to be the representative of consciousness and the nerve center of the solar plexus, the representative of emotion. So, it felt to me that my mind communicated with my feelings related to being and object. (Whyman 80)

It is clear that, within the enteric nervous system, the solar plexus is a prime contributor towards emotional behaviour. By stimulating and becoming aware of this energy source, vis-à-vis the sympathetic nervous system and the solar plexus,

the actor is now prepared to fuel emotional preparation for the role. What is exciting about exploring the importance of the solar plexus is discovering how acting pioneers and energy practitioners rely on the subtle body to evoke emotional readiness.

In *The Golden Buddha Changing Masks*, Mark Olsen offers:

Stanislavski states: I have read what the Hindu[s] say on the subject. They believe in the existence of a kind of vital energy called prana, which gives life to our body. According to their calculation, the radiating center of the prana is the solar plexus. Consequently, in addition to our brain, which is generally accepted as the nerve center and psychic center of our being, we have a similar source near the heart, in the solar plexus. (Olsen 38)

This passage carries considerable importance since it suggests Stanislavski, in his early stages of developing his acting system, was actually in tune with the subtle body and the connection it has to breath, emotional preparation, and acting.

In Jade Rosina McCutcheon's article on Stanislavski, *Awakening the Performing Body*, she writes about creative readiness. One of Stanislavski's early systems included helping the actor "find a conscious path to unconscious creativeness" (McCutcheon 16). This spiritual realism was devised to parallel *prana* energy and a creative state of mind. Stanislavski embraced this philosophy in an attempt to answer the problem of what he perceived to be a dislocation between the actor's spirit and soul, or the unconscious and subconscious (Whyman 76). In Andrew White's article in *Theatre Survey* (May 2006,) *Stanislavski and Ramacharaka: The Influence of Yoga and Turn-of-the-Century Occultism on the System*, he explains that Stanislavski drew on yoga practices to enhance concentration on the stage as early as 1906. This was right when *Three Sisters* was

being performed. Vera Soloviova, a member of the First Studio at Moscow Art Theater, comments:

We worked a great deal on concentration. It was called “to get into the circle.” We imagined a circle around us and sent “prana” rays of communion into the space to each other. Stanislavski said “send the prana there -- I want to reach through the tip of my finger -- to God - to the sky -- or, later on, my partner. I believe in my inner energy, and I give it out -- I spread it. (Soloviova et al. 136)

Soloviova describes an exercise Stanislavski used to train his actors to channel breath through the solar plexus energy source and send out emotional energy into the playing space. To achieve a deeper creative sense of the self, Stanislavski further developed exercises, such as freeing the muscles, attention, and the radiation of creative will and feeling, allowing the actor to perform as if it were second nature (Whyman 76).

In relationship to this, it is interesting to note in my yoga journal when my body fully released and allowed an internal fall to occur or when fatigue and mind chatter still played an active role in the practice, which detached my whole body connection. Synthesizing this to my work, I will give myself permission to invest in the emotional preparation, get out of my head, and be fully present with my scene partner.

1.4 Falling Through Interoceptive Awareness

After exploring the techniques of falling through the mat, it was time to turn my attention to honing my internal awareness. During the 2016 Winter term, my interoceptive awareness practice was deepened by the work of Professor Erika Batdorf, and by implementing The Batdorf Technique into my studio work.

Batdorf's pedagogy includes the term, *hooking up* as a constant internal scan of sensation and how blood, breath, gravity, pain, and pleasure awareness will align an actor's interior emotional life. Ultimately, the objective is to kinesthetically transfer response and behaviour while in a relationship with a scene partner. Batdorf describes kinesthetic transfer as "the brain's ability to recognize and respond to organic movement impulses" (Batdorf 230). I became incredibly compelled and curious about this work due to my advanced physical training. I have a long history in musical theatre and dance training, and I am also a certified yoga instructor. The Batdorf Technique challenges me to completely undo and release the work I think I need to do, in order to hook up internally. Coming from a dance background, releasing the core and moving beyond exteroceptive awareness became a huge obstacle for me. I enrolled in Batdorf's Spring Intensive where I spent seven hours a day, for eight days, exploring my interoceptive awareness and retooling how to internally hook up my emotional life with the goal of finding ecstasy. This is a term used by Batdorf to describe a whole body vibration, while in a relationship with a scene partner. I kept a journal of my findings throughout these fourteen days (see Appendix B). It is my objective to transition this high level of interoceptive awareness while I am rehearsing and performing the role of Chebutykin.

1.5 Falling Through Voice and Speech

As an associate faculty member at Canada's National Voice Intensive, I conducted a significant portion of my studio-based research. Not only did I help guide thirty participants through a rigorous curriculum based on Kristin Linklater's

pedagogy of freeing the natural voice, but I was also able to conduct my research and analysis on how releasing the diaphragm, psoas, and pelvis through breath can lead me towards internally falling to authentic behaviour. I assisted both Professor David Smukler and Judith Koltai's voice and body seminars, and participated in Gerry Trentham's elements workshops. I also performed a scene from *Julius Caesar*, directed by Gary Logan, and I was able to integrate the pedagogy into my studio work.

While in voice and body seminars, I felt a deep resonance with, yet resistance to, what was happening. The feeling of resistance transpired as a locked sacrum, not allowing the flow of energy and images to travel through my entire body. As an actor, it is my duty to discover and reveal the rich and culturally unique DNA that over time I have learned to protect and stifle due to norms and social standards. For example, during sessions of pelvic wheels (Franklin 21) and intense sacrum release work, I was often overcome by snake imagery, with which I am quite frightened. In Kundalini yoga, a coiled snake in the sacrum is a dominant source of energy; however, tracing this idea to my body, I realized that a fear of snakes goes back to the story of Adam and Eve. Perhaps my fear is not the snake but the idea of taking risks and being stuck in a dilemma. By opening up to this image at the cellular level, Smukler believes that this is my core source of tapping into authentic and truthful moments. This idea inspired an investigation for my 10-minute summer term solo creation exploration. My intention was to connect the words and stories of my great great grandfather, Aron Donner. The task was to discover where holds and locks from my ancestral background affect or hinder my work as an actor. While on text

and lying on arch-like props to align my archway alignment, I hooked up my interoceptive awareness and began my investigation.

Coupling this task with Koltai's investigation of proprioceptive awareness, the idea of alignment and supporting each internal arch, much like Erickson's Yoga philosophy, is indeed providing me with helpful knowledge in the fall of the pelvis. Bones are my support system; whereas skin and muscles are secondary. This subtle body awareness reminded me that simple form, for example Koltai's *quadrifold* position of folding the torso over and hanging from the pelvis and sits bones, allowed me to crumble within. From the quadrifold position, having feet parallel, bending forward from the hips and placing palms on the floor facing inward, it was imperative to find the space in between the thighbone and hip socket. To lift the inner arches, I pressed out the knees ever so slightly. I rocked back onto my heels, found my feet and rebounded up to the pelvis. My shoulder blades released down and out which allowed my occipital bone to hang in freedom. In my exploration, I questioned and envisioned where the air pocket and suspension occurred which allowed the pelvic bowl to fall into a natural/neutral space. After rolling up, I lifted the vertebrae as I spread the collarbone wide. My practice was to release the sternum slightly inward; this gave me the space to lift my upper spine from the shoulder blades. I softened the shoulder/arm sockets ever so slightly and pressed back. Doing so released my perineum and pelvic bowl muscles. The basin released and the flood of sensations soared up the channel to my soft palate/top of mouth and out to the world. I also observed that the soft palate has a delicate relationship when dealing with the tongue root release.

Carl Jung spoke of the four elements symbolically as the four types of consciousness: sensation, thinking, intuition and emotions (Shepherd 367). The following section will highlight journal notes from my investigation of Trentham's element work and how my interoceptive awareness allowed me to fall internally:

Gerry Trentham's Element practice:

Earth → Mountain, mineral, tectonics
Viewing/being a part of the dilemma.

Fire → I was able to recreate my Batdorf Technique "orange" state (Journal 3) and rage it into fire. There was quietness and power within and the sensations of my body lead me to the state. Pain in right shoulder, gut, and pelvis engulfed in flames. Recreating the states in a walk; hand in hand with my scene partner and then on text. The task was to step forward with the dial turned to 10 internal/3 external with one 8 external spark. Moving forward, I need to allow the state to propel in my listening and perhaps on text is when it backdrafts internally!

Air → FLOW; finding the chi, the *prana* within the work.
Solar Plexus awareness.

Water → chaos; hard to stay in; yet transformative
In every element, there were water states.

While exploring; fluid sensations of waves rippling through my body; air bubbles and what part of my inner life is floating in the air sac; suspension with sun gleaming down on me, under the boardwalk; ice, crunchy, hard, yet slippery surface.

Through the exploration of elements within the work of internally falling, I am becoming aware of my sternum placement and collapsing it inward to reveal my actual spine. From there, I can lift my occipital bone and soften my shoulders out and back. The outcome of this work has proven to release any locking of the pelvic floor and open an active channel for me to be present in authentic behaviour.

Shepherd states, "once we recognize the elements of earth, air, fire and water within us, we recognize the world's sensitivity within us; and then we can experience the

battlements coming down and discover within us a clarity of being that imparts felicity to our every response and action" (368).

I also had the opportunity to be coached in the role of Brutus from *Julius Caesar*, directed by Associate Professor of Speech & Dialects at Carnegie Mellon, Gary Logan. In addition to his director notes (*see* Appendix C), Logan included the guideposts of physical or mental humours into the work. The four humours include: *Sanguine* [optimistic, passionate, amorous], *phlegmatic* [dull, indifferent, idle], *choleric* [angry, bad tempered], and *melancholy* [sad, gloomy, sullen]. As an actor working on Shakespearean texts, one must find the balance, or imbalance, of these humours as clues to determining the character's traits. I decided that I have a sanguine/melancholic disposition, which fits into the sanguine/melancholic traits of Brutus.

1.6 Falling in a Performance State

For the culmination of my summer investigation of internally falling towards authentic behaviour, I had the honour of traveling to Sonoma, California and creating a new production for Transcendence Theater Company. Not only has this experience been one of applying my research to performance (*see* Appendix D), but I have also found an artistic community based on authentic collaboration with the commitment to heal the body, mind, and soul through art. The objective of my research while performing in Jack London State Park was to strip down and retool my exteroceptive awareness in an artistic form that I have built my career upon.

Instead, I wanted to explore the internal kingdom of sensations while honouring the task of aligning and falling within.

Looking back and connecting the dots of the opportunities I had this past summer, my time in graduate school, and the moments that brought me on this journey have all offered me a deep and profound appreciation of leading from the gut, collaborating in the spirit of generosity, and honouring the act of self-care. The word “wholeness” best describes the outcomes of my work. Shepherd states, “wholeness does not tolerate division. When an authentic moment is happening, I see it from my gut, I feel from there, there are no boundaries. In that time of surrender, I have arrived at my true, authentic self” (Shepherd, “Discussing the Fall”). It is with this sense of wholeness and unconscious competence that my intention is to perform the role Chebutykin with vibrating interoceptive awareness and the freedom to fall internally.

2. AN INVESTIGATION OF ANTON CHEKHOV'S *THREE SISTERS*

Although Russia has an extremely dense and rich history, I will not be addressing the details of the Russian Revolution. The scope of this analysis will acknowledge the political and economic turmoil that affected theatres at the time. The creation and development of *Three Sisters* began in 1899 (Chekhov 211). Chekhov's writing was affected by social, political, ethnic, and religious tensions. As a result, *Three Sisters* delivered a “voracious and illuminating cross-section of Russian life among the provincial intelligentsia prior to the Revolution of 1905” (Tolstoy iii).

2.1 Historical Context – Russian History and Society

From 1881 to 1894, Tsar Alexander III played a vital role in the history of Imperial Russia. He carried out “a major shift in its foreign policy, from its traditional alliance with Germany to an alignment with France, which ultimately failed” (Polunov et al. 174). The outcome of this political act created crisis and revolution amongst the people of Russia. As a result, “the revolutionary upheavals of the early twentieth century buried the Romanov monarchy and ushered in the new Soviet period of Russian history” (Polunov et al. 174). Afraid that popular theatres would become “hotbeds of subversion and infect the common folk with dangerous political and social ideas ... a two-tiered censorship structure was introduced in 1888” (Swift 2). In the late 1890s and the early 1900s, the Russian political climate saw an uprising of the Zemstvo opposition. This is important because it marks “the rise of a liberal social and political sect of local self-government that became a driving force of opposition to the government” (Polunov, et al. 208). In time, “professional associations of teachers, doctors, lawyers, engineers, and other occupational groups formed a new social force, the intelligentsia, which began to take over the leadership of the liberal movement from the Zemstvo activists” (Polunov et al. 209).

During this uprising, where freedom of speech was limited and public meetings required official permission, “theatres often became scenes of political protest and conflict, as actors and audiences related plays and performances to local concerns” (Swift 95). Authorities allowed theatres to stage only plays that “the censors had specifically approved for viewing by lower-class audiences,” (Swift 2)

regardless of whether they had been approved for other theatres. Swift comments that the mere fact that Russians of all classes rubbed shoulders in St. Petersburg people's theatres, for example, exclaimed "the equalization of social groups" (qtd. in Swift 20). Socially progressive playwrights, such as Chekhov, Gorky, and Ibsen began to infiltrate the imperial theatres.

The Moscow Art Theatre emphasized lifelike sets, historically accurate costumes, a socially progressive repertoire, and a realistic ensemble of actors "who did not strive to outshine one another brought a new kind of theatre onto the scene" (Swift 33). The audiences of the imperial theatres represented the various social elites of the capitals: "nobles, officials, military officers, merchants, the intelligentsia, and, usually occupying seats in the gods, students" (Swift 19). Chekhov insisted that "every detail of military life must be right and co-opted a friendly artillery colonel to see that it was so" (Hingley 195). "'He was anxious,' Stanislavsky records, 'that we should not turn the military into the usual theatrical heel-clickers and spur-jinglers, but that we should play simple, charming and good-natured people, dressed in worn and non-theatrical uniforms, without any theatrical-military erectness of carriage, raising of shoulders, bluntness and so on'" (Hingley 195). As *Three Sisters* continued its run at the Moscow Art Theatre, society's steadily increasing pressure on the government led to the first Russian revolution, in 1905-07 (Polunov et al. 208).

2.2 Moscow Art Theatre

In 1898 the Moscow Art Theatre made its name, as well as Chekhov's reputation, with *The Seagull*. The name of the theatre, known by its capital letters of

MKhAT, caught on as a synonym for the theatre as “art dedicated to life” (*Chekhov* 210). Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko had envisioned The Moscow Art Theatre as more than an artistic endeavour: “they wanted it to be an agent of enlightenment and social transformation, a ‘people's theater’ that would bring art to audiences hitherto excluded from the mainstream of Russian cultural life” (Swift 1). The interpersonal relationships at MkhAT ran deep. Chekhov had known Nemirovich-Danchenko for nearly twenty years, the actor Vishnevsky who played the schoolteacher Kulygin was a Taganrog classmate, and Olga Knipper, who played Masha, later became his wife (*Chekhov* 211).

Burenin, a hostile journalist at the time, wrote a series of telegrams published in the press, which prefaced the appearance of *Three Sisters*:

"First act written," "Half second act sketched out," "Three-quarters of third act finished," "Title of play is Three Tom-tits," "No. Title of play, not Three Tom-tits, but Three Aunts," "No. Not Three Aunts but Five Sisters," "just Sisters," "Two Sisters," finally "Three Sisters." (qtd. in Hingley 194)

The production mystified the critics: “the very complexity of the play, in which each character expresses a self-sufficient philosophy of life ... left them bereft of reactions” (*Chekhov* 211). The opening night of *Three Sisters* on January 31, 1901, confirmed Chekhov as Russia’s greatest dramatist and Moscow Art Theatre as its leading theatre. As was Chekhov’s aesthetic, “the public saw their lives enacted: the three sisters stood for all educated women marooned in the provinces ... so moved was the audience that the curtain fell to total silence” (*Anton* 525). On a humorous note, in the audience was a reviewer by the name of Ezhov. He believed that the

cuckold schoolteacher Kulygin was a caricature of himself and, in his review, he wrote:

“All the heroes whine, none is satisfied. There is a drunken old doctor who has read nothing ... There is adultery (Chekhov’s favorite theme) ... The content: three sisters, daughters of a brigadier-general, their brother studying to be a professor, all passionately desire to move to live in Moscow ... The play is acted splendidly.” (qtd. in *Anton* 525)

Stanislavsky found the play *Three Sisters* was so “saturated with meaning” that, although he acted in it hundreds of times, every single performance “revealed something new” (Hingley 236). Twenty-two years after its first performance, “five of the most prominent roles in *Three Sisters* were still played by the same actors” (Tolstoy iv). While it is one of Chekhov's most representative and complex works, it is also his more “direct and most emotional treatment of life” (*Chekhov* 211).

2.3 Anton Chekhov

As I begin my investigation into *Three Sisters* I find that Chekhov writes with a density that allows the actor to explore the many layers of circumstance and relationship. In *The Effect of Chekhov's Work*, William Gerhardi states that Chekhov's work “is the art of creating convincing illusions of the life that is. And ‘the life that is’ is what is in the material sense of reality” (Caputi 375). Chekhov was especially interested in unpredictable moment-to-moment human behavior and he believed that a play should “reflect the inconsistencies of life” (Pennington 25). Ronald Peacock, author of *The Poet in the Theatre: Chekhov*, states that “he shows his people in their detachment from affair ... their daily occupations, activities, and professional duties”(qtd. in Caputi 385). This is evident in *Three Sisters* with multiple

relationships in distress, the struggle for authority, and the simple desire to move to Moscow, this “life as it is lived” (Pennington 6) mentality becomes quite evident in the Prozorov household.

Throughout his life, Chekhov practiced as a doctor. He performed exceptional work in the communities where he lived, “first of all near Moscow and later in Yalta in Southern Russia, where he moved after being diagnosed with [a well-kept secret condition of] tuberculosis in 1897” (Pennington 9). Specifically, “he assisted in alleviating famine, cared for local peasants, helped forestall a cholera epidemic, conducted a district census, and opened three schools and a post office” (Pennington 9). At the age of 44, tuberculosis took Chekhov’s life, only three and a half years after the opening of *Three Sisters*. For this reason, I find it interesting that our director, Tanja Jacobs, has made a choice to set our production in a sanatorium located in Yalta, Russia, during the remaining days of Chekhov's life. My journey in this production will begin as a young doctor caring for the actor portraying Chekhov and, through the re-telling of the play, my persona will step into the role of Doctor Ivan Chebutykin. I am intrigued with this character journey as it strikes a strong resemblance to Chekhov's reality living a double life as a struggling doctor and playwright.

2.4 *Three Sisters*

Chekhov’s association with the Moscow Art Theatre was integral to the preparation and staging of *Three Sisters*. It was “specially conceived for the theatre early in 1899, and written with great care and difficulty in summer and autumn

1900" (*Chekhov* 211). After many telegrams, Chekhov arrived in Moscow on October 23, 1900, with a manuscript of *Three Sisters*. The next day he read the whole play out to the assembled theatre. There was a dismayed silence afterwards – "nobody expected anything so complex and sad" (*Anton* 518). Scholars believe this play is "the most intimate relationship achieved between playhouse and playwright" (Tolstoy iv). Even during the intensified socio-political climate of Russia, Rayfield suggests that Chekhov's later plays, *The Seagull*, *The Cherry Orchard*, as well as *Three Sisters*, emasculate male agency in that they "no longer revolve around an 1880s 'mono-heroic' character; however, [the] action is complicated by three or four female characters" (*Chekhov* 94). Chekhov demonstrates this in *Three Sisters* as he unpacks what happens to a family when the "male figurehead loses authority" (Pennington 20) and isolates the lives of the women and men in "whatever intellectual degree or moral rank" (Caputi 386). Caputi writes, "when they hear a profound inner voice that detaches them from a lifeless material world ... [it] plunges them into a vital sensitiveness ... [and] they become, in feeling, revolutionary" (386). This is especially true for Chebutykin. In Act 3, the most destructive of all Chekhov's third acts, Chebutykin breaks the porcelain clock and with it the sisters' hopes that time is not yet past (*Chekhov* 214-15), to which he states his grave refrain, "What do I know? Who knows anything?" (*Chekhov* 47). The sense of detachment Chebutykin endures to cope with his disintegrated livelihood is overshadowed by the loneliness he truly feels and reveals his truth.

2.5 Doctor Ivan Romanych Chebutykin

In his time, Chekhov performed at a high proficiency in medicine; however, he chose to characterize Chebutykin with an opposing outlook. Doctor Chebutykin has cut himself off from life. Pennington comments, “at one point alcohol mercilessly forces him to see the consequences of this, but he returns in the end to a cruel indifference toward everyone except Irina” (19). His love and affection for Irina parallels his hopeless love for Irina’s mother. In a way to dismiss and detach, Chebutykin’s “newspaper-reading and note taking were his way of not engaging with what he didn’t like” (Pennington 180). Chebutykin says, “I’ve never done anything. I graduated from school and I haven’t lifted a finger since. I haven’t even read a book” (Chekhov 9) so even his newspaper-reading is limited to non-literary subjects which suggest there would seem to be some laziness and ignorance in him (Pennington 179). Due to Jacobs’ unique staging of *Three Sisters*, Chebutykin will be fluent in American Sign Language. I further discuss the history, significance, and limitations in the application of the role portion of this document.

One of Chebutykin’s most revealing moments is the intoxicated accusation regarding the death of a patient in Zasyp. This shocking outburst of hatred for the world around him is full of torment (Pennington 180). In my investigation, I discovered that the detail regarding the woman patient in Zasyp, for whose death he was responsible, is “absent in the ‘Yalta manuscript’ and only introduced in the ‘Moscow manuscript’ to emphasize the element of cynicism in Chebutykin’s character” (Chekhov and Hingley 311). The “scar” of Act 3 is evident in Act 4 as Chebutykin’s resignation for the world around him is demonstrated through his

complacent and chilling way of covering it up (Pennington 180). He complains gently of having been forgotten and looks forward to retirement and a reformed way of life. Chebutykin tells Andrei, "Put your hat on your head, take your stick in hand, and walk out the door. Don't look back. Just keep walking. The farther you go, the better" (Chekhov 106). Over these scenes of "desertion, betrayal and disillusion, Chebutykin reigns like a god" (*Chekhov* 214). This comes across in Chebutykin's counting of time. He watches the minutes to death and departure. "Time creates tension and the pathos without which the tragic element would be impossible" (*Chekhov* 216). This can be looked at more in depth, in the examination of the Maly Theatre's production of *Three Sisters*.

2.6 The Maly Theatre of St. Petersburg

I have chosen to examine The Maly Theatre of St. Petersburg's production of *Three Sisters* under the direction Lev Dodin. The "emotionally vibrant" (Isherwood) and "compelling" (Aucoin) production transferred to North America making a debut performance at the Brooklyn Academy of Music on April 12, 2012, and later revived at Arts Emerson on March 2, 2016. In the director's note, Dodin states, "We are familiar with plans that have fallen through, lost illusions and impossible loves...We all, unfortunately, understand the universal language of loss...and in this life we work to stay true to ourselves, preserving personal dignity at any cost" (Epstein). Dodin sets a "somber tone through a stage picture that looks like scenes on despairingly lonely postcards" (Goodwin). Epstein illustrates that the story unfolds through "the window frames of a simple, wooden outer wall of a house in the

country, an edifice that moves progressively closer to the audience as the staging gives us increasingly intimate views of the characters."

Speaking through translator Dina Dodina, Maly's artistic coordinator, Lev Dodin states, "My choice to do it like this was because our everyday life is not a passive existence without actions. It's full of passion. It's full of struggle ... When I say passions, I mean ideological, intellectual, sexual, and social. This is the life Chekhov described, and this is the same life we're living today" (Wallenberg). Dodin continues: "In *Three Sisters* all the characters are maximalists. They don't want just a little bit of happiness. They want absolute happiness...[and this] is why they're always unhappy with what they have. But we all live hoping to achieve something that to others seems obviously an illusion." On the contrary, "the plays are brimming with life. People so often say, 'The characters are meek and gentle and do nothing. They just chatter away and don't take any action in their lives.'" Dodin further explains, "But in reality, Chekhov's plays are populated with characters who act endlessly. They do things all the time to try and change things that seem inevitable in their lives. For me, Chekhov's characters are the great warriors who are opposing the tragic laws of life. Often these warriors lose, but they keep struggling until the very end" (Wallenberg).

In a New York Times review, Charles Isherwood proposed that Alexander Zavyalov "is wonderfully funny — but equally moving" as the alcoholic Dr. Chebutykin. One of the main concerns with the performance is the distracting climbing of the wall, in the play's final moments, to take a perch above the front door. Isherwood credits Dodin's directorial decision as a "dubious bit of invention."

I am very curious as to why this directorial choice was made. Through further investigation, Donald Rayfield comments, "Doctor Chebutykin is the father-figure to the three sisters and the god of the play on a symbolic plane" (*Chekhov* 213). Chebutykin sees everything that comes "to hurt the sisters, presides over it, and does not intervene" (*Chekhov* 214). The god-like presence is further corroborated in Wallenberg's review stating that "as the play progresses and the sisters' dream of going back to Moscow fades into an illusion, the house [including Chebutykin's perch] with dark empty windows, ominously creeps forward. It pushes the characters to the edge of the stage, confined in this oppressive world from which they long to escape."

It has just been announced that Lev Dodin's *Three Sisters* will be playing The John F. Kennedy Center For The Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. in April 2017. I will be attending this performance in order to further enhance my understanding of the play.

3. APPLICATION OF ARTISTIC CHALLENGE

To be transparent, I am reflecting on the Fall 2016 term and the work that I have done in the studio. This realization has taken me aback, since the idea of falling internally has not been on the forefront of my mind like the force it was while researching in the summer. I am reminded that this is why interoceptive awareness and pelvic floor release is my challenge. This is why I am unsatisfied with my studio progress because I do not feel like I have fully integrated this task. In all of my studio courses, my professors continue to challenge me to lead from the pelvis, find

the economy of breath while discovering the thought, and instead of intellectualizing the process, to experience it through sensation. This is how you connect to the work on a cellular level; this is how you invite a scene partner or audience to share a breath/body connection. And therefore, my foray into my thesis role preparation begins. The question that I seek while integrating my artistic challenge of internally falling into my artistic process is, “Do I fully believe in my character’s three-dimensional state of being to proceed with unconscious competence?”

3.1 Process to Falling Inside-Out

Chekhov believed that “the development of character should inform the actor's point of view” (Pennington 8). He states, “It is for the audience, not the actor, to make moral judgments if they want to, and the best we can do is not to exaggerate or comment” (Pennington 8). My process in exploring the specificity of Chebutykin began with examining a list of twenty-six questions, provided by acting Professor Paul Lampert (*see Appendix E*). These questions range from character history to objectives and obstacles, as well as creative and stimulating external questions for the actor to grapple with. The super objective of this task is to question: What serves the play? Through this investigation, I will create a container of knowledge pulled from the text, as well as use intellectual inference, that will aid me in the development of the role from an authentic outside-in point of view.

3.2 Falling in the Work

Where is the internal fall within all of this? How can I inhabit the character from the inside out? One character trait that will be a challenge is Chebutykin's age. In her book, *A Challenge for the Actor*, Uta Hagen states, "In the rare cases when, during your early years, you may be asked to play someone over sixty...you will better serve the character by using one of the conditions that manifest themselves in the body as a result of those years and its psychological effect on you." (Hagen 263). This was in particular interest in me as this character is twenty-five years older than me. Chekhov also believed this, and he knew that "it is often best to express an emotion by means of action, even if it is only the folding or unfolding of a newspaper, and even if it seems to be the opposite of the truth" (Pennington 181). Before rehearsals begin, I will explore Grotowski's river work, which Professor Allyson McMackon introduced to me during movement classes in the Fall 2016 semester, to conjure specific physical guideposts by cracking open the words and images I speak. Through the pelvic bowl, I will root the found images into the development of my character body. Not only will this awaken my physical life but intelligently awaken any blocks, tension, or holds my character body will have to work through. In a class discussion with McMackon, she suggests that this work be done before the director solidifies any blocking so that the actor can bring a flexibility, willingness of play and offer while being fully supported by a steadfast foundation. Along with following Kristin Linklater's warm up progression of voice, breath, and pelvic floor awareness (213), the river work will also serve my process

by synthesizing Shepherd's belly brain wholeness approach to the work and discovering the alignment of the character's spine. There is movement in stillness.

From the script, Chebutykin is often occupied reading newspapers while drifting off like a migratory bird too old fly (Chekhov 59). I plan to do an extensive pulling of Russian newspapers through microfiche resources to help facilitate truthful physical behaviour while dropping into this imaginary circumstance. This will awaken my senses and allow me to discover the character's world three-dimensionally.

Pennington offers a poignant statement: "If the production has delicately established [Chebutykin's] lack of self-worth, his sense of intellectual failure and his disappointed love, an audience will realize how his demons have come to control him after a drink" (Pennington 180). Personally, alcohol is often the cause of me detaching from my problems. As a result, it creates downward spiral behaviour. Living in New York City while pursuing a career in theatre is a harsh and often unforgiving lifestyle. I have battled minor bouts of alcoholism and at times struggled with the same attributes of Chebutykin. Is this a gateway into my process in discovering the emotional core and underbelly of the character? This is extremely relatable and will allow me to bring authenticity to the role.

3.3 Integration of American Sign Language

Lastly, my process in developing this role will be in the understanding and execution of American Sign Language. In the world in which Jacobs imagines *Three Sisters*, Irina is deaf. Due to the close relationship of Irina and Chebutykin a portion

of my text, as well as interpreting other character's text to Irina, will become a physical and gestural form that I will adopt into my actor process.

In a dissertation examining the structure of Russian Sign Language, Vadim Kimmelman states that "RSL emerged at the beginning of the 19th century and the first school for deaf children was founded in 1806 in Pavlovsk" (7). Kimmelman claims that there are only anecdotal references that RSL is related to French Sign Language, as the first teachers were trained in France and Vienna (7). ASL and FSL have major influence on one another as language founders, Laurent Clerc, a Deaf teacher from France, and Thomas Gallaudet, a hearing American minister, blended the indigenous languages to form the basis of what we currently know as American Sign Language (Smith et al. vi). To carry this information into my character development, I will deduce that Chebutykin was on the brink of early childhood RSL/ASL development congruent with his practice in medicine. In 1880, at the International Congress on the Education of the Deaf Conference in Milan, Italy, "educators who supported oral instruction for Deaf student successfully blocked the influence of educators supporting Sign Language" (Smith et al. vii). This means that, for the next forty years, Deaf children were taught by an oral method instead of by Deaf teachers. Therefore, Irina's mother brought Chebutykin into the Prozorov household to teach Irina ASL and became an invaluable contributor to Irina's development. This also corroborates the deep affection and care Chebutykin has for the sisters' mother.

I have completed ASL Level 101 at the Canadian Hearing Society where I studied the beginning comprehension of exchanging personal information,

discussing living situations, as well as sharing stories in front of the class. Knowing that in only a few short months I will be performing ASL with a high level of fluency and internal awareness, I am grateful that I had this opportunity to learn how difficult it is to lift the text off the page and into a breath relationship. I participated in York's YFS Access Centre ASL tutorials, as well as individually worked with Deaf artist Sage Willow, who transcribed my text into an ASL gloss (*see* Appendix F).

While in rehearsal, the plan of action is to integrate ASL into my daily warm-up. With the repetition of signing my lines, I will incorporate them into my river explorations, unifying breath, body, and language as one fluid unit. It is my goal to allow this new skill set to become second nature and live within my body as naturally as possible. The challenge will be to open my pelvic floor, hook up my emotional life, and have authentic impulses while on spoken text and through ASL.

3.4 Post Rehearsal and Performance Release

As part of my process, I will document my pre-show crumble, performance falling, and post-show release (*see* Appendix D). My take-away from this reflection is realizing that every day my energetic body, its needs and its wants, are constantly changing. Having this awareness and giving myself the permission to release my pelvic bowl, in whatever state I am in, will allow me to approach the work and hook up with a sense of freedom and play. After each performance, the challenge will be to honour the emotional memory left in the body. My goal is to not hold on in order to recreate but rather, to reset the body to a state of readiness and possibility.

4. MOMENTUM AFTER THE FALL

In *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, Sri Swami Satchidananda lists sutra number 1.12 as: “*abhyasa vairagyabhyam tannirodhah* ~ these mental modifications are restrained by practice and non-attachment” (18). Practice and non-attachment are two core principles on which the entire system of yoga rests. Swami Jnaneshvara states, “practice leads you in the right direction, while non-attachment allows you to continue the inner journey without getting sidetracked in the pains and pleasure along the way” (“Yoga Meditation”). I integrated this mantra into my practice while investigating my process, rehearsing, and presenting *Three Sisters*.

Knowing that director Tanja Jacobs was approaching the piece with Chekhovian specificity, incorporating ASL, and all in a short four and a half week rehearsal process, I had a gut feeling this was going to be an ambitious undertaking. It was at that time I declared *practice and non-attachment* as my mantra. I dove into the work, studied ASL, actioned my script, rivered compelling images, and did my twenty-six question character analysis, including the five lists the director invited us to make on our first day of rehearsal (see Appendix E) all with the awareness of practice and non-attachment. It gave me permission to honour my task of internally falling, to make mistakes, to be curious, to take risks while in rehearsal, and to challenge my body to inhabit new internal rhythms that played opposite of the action happening around me.

I recall a moment in rehearsal, while working through Act Two, when I experienced this wave of overwhelming frustration with all the elements I had to juggle. I was not only lifting the words off the page and in a breath relationship with

my scene partners for the first time, but also had to add a level of ASL proficiency that needed to carry my actions and objectives forward. I attempted to achieve this all while trying to scan my internal life and begin the journey of where this character lives inside me. My work felt choppy and disconnected, but as we repeated the acts, I began to feel my feet hit the ground. As a result, my archway alignment activated, I opened my awareness to a sensual three-dimensional exploration, softened into my character body and my pelvic floor and my perineum began to respond full of breath and impulses. I also made a commitment to myself not to treat the signing like choreography, a goal-oriented tool that is readily available to me, but to personalize the text with the importance of communicating these words to Irina.

As we moved onto Act Three, I had my first pass of my monologue. After a discussion with the director, my intention was not to go inward and land in drunken despair, but rather to feel the sensations of the body and bounce between vocal and emotional energies that were unexpected. As I continued to rehearse this scene, I began to connect a sense of wholeness from my belly brain, reveal Chebutykin's phlegmatic and choleric humours, and activate my lower body. Establishing trust in standing tall in my work and being flexible to responding to my inner world of image and sensation allowed me to fall, introceptively, and also to create authentic behaviour. It was at this moment that I sensed my internal pelvic energy becoming cavernous. From the river work, I was able to upload the images I conjured and felt the sensations of the rise, release, and swing of the fall. I did this, for example, by washing my hands and combing my beard while playing opposite of what the text

was revealing. Moments later, Chebutykin punctures his way through the stratosphere, somewhat of an existential breakthrough, and loses himself in his drunken torment and shame. He smashes the mother's clock and projects his heart-centered light of hate onto the characters in the room. In my river work, I have identified an animalistic persona that I was able to tap into and ride the crest of this internal dive. At this moment, I scanned and felt the soaring vibrations in my internal kingdom of sensation. Exploring the senses further, the doctor utters to Irina, "would you care for a fig, mademoiselle" (79), which is unexpected and inherently sexual. I connected this moment to my deep affection for the mother, recalling the melodies of the opera's we heard at the Hermitage. To drop myself back into the reality of the situation, I discovered a moment of eye contact with Doctor Chekhov as I exited.

There were moments in rehearsal when my preparation work did not come through. One evening, in the final ten minutes of rehearsal, we got back to my monologue. My intention was to drop my breath into the pelvis, but I ended up forcing the text and thoughts. My breath began to ride high in my torso and I lacked the connection of wholeness and sensitivity from my belly. I felt like I was drowning in the deep end and not diving. Jacobs expressed that she may not have been accurate in her direction with me. She asked me to find a larger space within the piece, dynamically, but I ended up pushing. I missed the mark. Jacobs said to me, "It's a difficult acting challenge, Act 3 and 4, for the Doctor. Revealing the flaws, shame and guilt, not stepping in to change the future but he wallows in self-pity and dread. He killed a woman, and it's his fault. He did not save her. Gut wrenching!" I

left that evening with a lot of information to think about and unpack. In that precise moment, I realized that there was still a lot to undo and release.

As we moved closer to our final days, I changed my language leading up to performance week. I stayed in the process throughout the weekend. My warm up routine was consistent. I arrived an hour before call time to do my yoga practice and vocal warm up, based on the Linklater pedagogy. After call time, I found myself hovering in the space. I gave myself time to warm up, visualize, and create a stream of positive self-talk mantras. I continued to investigate my internal kingdom of sensations and, while sitting in hero's pose, meditating before opening night, I experienced this awesome sensation of muffled cannons exploding or fireworks booming in my pelvis. I did not correct it but continued the breath deep into my belly. Then, boom! It began to happen one after the other, crumbling my pelvic bowl until my spine had collapsed (*see Journal 8*). Again, staying in the sensation, I allowed the breath to re-form my pelvis and align my spine. I have never felt something quite like it and will be integrated into my warm up practice and teaching.

Act Four became my playground for testing my internal fall. In the rehearsal process, we did not devote as much time in clarifying each moment like we did in the other acts, so it felt disconnected from the journey. During the performance of the show, the arch of the character landed in my pelvis. In my character development, I decided that Chebutykin had acquired psoriasis of the liver, causing much suffering and affecting my choleric character body, which helped fire up the sensation of pain throughout my body. Through this discovery, I embodied a gentle

sternness and direct point of view, all while revealing the vulnerability, deteriorating, and detachment of the character.

Looking back on this process, the awareness of non-attachment was most prominent when it came to the ASL. Over the months leading up to rehearsal, I completed my ASL 101 level at the Canadian Hearing Society and was coached by Sage to learn four pages of ASL from a gloss she provided (*see Appendix F*). Once we were in rehearsal, the director was able to curate when ASL was needed to move the action forward. More often than not, I had to let go of the work I prepared. I often acknowledged that I had the ASL ready to use; however, we began to learn a different rhythm of the show and how to insert ASL in moments of communication and comprehension for Irina. I will say that having Jacobs cut the projected titles created an energetic shift in my process. Something we had been talking and weaving into the fabric of the work and world created, the bridge between the deaf and hearing audience, was now gone. From the inside, it seemed as if the task of inclusion, what made this production bilingual, was stripped away. Our collective process all of a sudden became about a privileged hearing person's theatrical experience, not having to deal with a noisy projector fan, and witnessing hearing actors use ASL.

After *Three Sisters* had finished and I began to reflect on my work, an important, high-stakes audition came up where I applied my techniques of internally falling. In the week leading up to it, I conjured images, unpacked provocative pieces of text through river explorations, released and revealed the feminine and masculine qualities, and solidified the arguments of the speeches all to

integrate a level of wholeness. On the day, I approached my warm up with the same rigour of internal awareness and entered the audition room hooked up, aligned, and in a state of readiness; however, I did not execute my monologues with the same fall as I did with my work as Chebutykin. In fact, I crashed as if my mind short-circuited and my body did not know how to respond. This was not the kind of fall I was expecting. Internally, the sensations were so loud that I froze and the sharpest sensation was the dryness in my mouth. What happened? I felt defeated and utterly disappointed that the subtle internal awareness I have cultivated at my time at York did not shine through. Upon reflecting on what had happened, and seeking guidance from Professors Smukler and Batdorf, I had come to accept that I am not the same person, the same actor, as I was when I built up my previous audition habits. Auditioning is an entirely new beast and to bring this new-found work of revealing, exposing my heart, and staying in process was in direct conflict with a long-term audition performance body I had previously cultivated.

Here lies my subsequent investigation: connecting the dots in integrating my expertise in internally falling and presenting my unique body experience in the vulnerable way I know I have the potential to achieve. Moving forward, I must embrace this retooling and integration with forgiveness and non-attachment. At times I will fail significantly; however, with a willingness to be truthful and honest with my process, my sensitivity to sensation will cultivate an authentic exploration and a dense understanding of what it means to dare greatly and fall internally.

5. JOURNAL OF EXPLORATION AND DISCOVERY

1. Friday, January 6

Morning session with Tanja: Worked on Act 3 monologue and the world in which he arrives, gets drunk, the conversation about Zasyp and woman, seeking to help but lacks courage or strength to make a change, guilt, heroic duty unrealized, larger than expected. Don't live in pity but explore the emotional range of text, unpredictable, vocal quality, talking myself out of helping, the battle of extremes.

The moment before: drinking vodka while chaos is happening in the home, fire → Demonstrates lack of initiative.

Am I an alcoholic? Yes, long term battle. Body pain, psoriasis of the liver. Survival.

Discovering the psychology of this man and his internal plight.

Dual behaviour/actions.

Super Objective: to love the girls and be admired.

Mother's clock, we've already destroyed it so "what's the point?"

Realizations of illusions, realism vs. idealism, a moment of truth, SEE!

2. Thursday, January 12

Doing river work before rehearsal proved to ignite my internal and imagistic life. Working through Act 4, sitting and observing the other character's planning to depart; I'm able to hook up my emotional life. Although the task is not to play the sentiment and preciousness of my relationships, his deep knowing comes out as a matter of fact. Chebutykin is pulled between two phrases, "what's the difference" and "ta rara boom de ay." His need to lead with indifference and the other to conjure moments of nostalgia to let go. Tanja questioned my impulse to say goodbye to the baby. She said, "Why did you do that?" "Because I'm acknowledging there's a baby in the carriage. This is his family, almost like his lifeline and will never see them again," I responded. She did not care for that choice and directed me not to acknowledge the baby. Too sentimental? Anyway, the final run of this beat connected the dots, but some moments need clarity. As of now, walking up to meet Solyony feels wonky. The timing and momentum aren't there yet. River work, in notes.

3. Tuesday, January 17

Came to campus early and found a studio to do some river work. Explored and sought the phrase, "the one I let die." Very informative, not what I thought I would conjure. In rehearsal, we jumped into Act 3, and I got a few passes at my monologue and the following clock moment. Tanja seemed pleased with the work. It was in the large world we discussed, could use more freedom in shifting thought to thought in a more severe way. In the club section, my blocking shifted to the mirror, and my action is to mock. The ugly shame heart centre light is starting to beam out in a harsh way. As a drunkard, the possibility of turning dark on others is the unpredictable part. Can't contain my dissatisfaction and disdain for those men. And me. Allow DISGUSTING to be full. Quick shift when others enter. I felt hooked up; my breath was flowing. The image work is vibrant, but I have to let it go and be in

the moment. Give myself permission to know that it's happening internally and I need to commit to serving the words out!! Less naval.

4. Thursday, January 19

First full run through with costumes. Woah! We got through the piece. It's interesting and very informative to learn and discover the physical, emotional, and intellectual journey of the Doctor. There is still a lot of mystery to uncover, but I feel like I'm opening up and stepping into uncharted territory. Seems out of the body at times, I hope with not too much extroception but the feeling of using the voice, character body, image life, and his words that carry me. That's where trust comes in that I stick to the internal work and keep exploring and know that Tanja will guide me if I go astray. Where was the internal fall? Did the pelvic floor open? Was there flow in the work? At times, perhaps. The scene with Andrei at the end of Act 2 flopped, and the end of the play seemed too naval. Where's my state of being? Knowing I'm not leaving. It will all stay, perhaps. What does it matter??

5. Friday, January 20

Is the work happening? The arc of the show seems detached. Willingness to dive into the world. To fall. When I dive into the water, there's a quiet stillness against my body, a chaotic rush of pressure closing in, yet a freedom and unknowing if/when/how I will rise. This is the fall that I seek.

6. Sunday, January 22 Tech: cue-to-cue

In the moments lighting the third act, going through the motions of my monologue, my task was to focus on the breath. To drop it into the pelvic bowl and visualize and image the discovery of thought. Building in physical action/character body. Allow the actions and vocal freedom to respond from breath.

Chaos! Feeling unsure due to the wild rehearsal process. Needed to check in. Find my feet. Chatted with Erika to help get a sense of introceptive. Interesting, she mentioned that I might be too aware of internal work that it doesn't feel like anything. Put it in the legs, stretch/yawn, feel the contraction and release, away from tensing face!!! Paul assured me to stay on track, remain in process. He gifted me with an awesome analogy of Work, Prayer, Carnival. We've done the work and right now, we're in prayer, finding wholeness within self but also in discovery. On Thursday, we will arrive at the carnival and play.

Solid rehearsal tonight. Found timing to prep and hook up and while in the scene, invited audience into my personal journey yet kept it out. Felt the floor, being on voice, connects the fall. Breath. Enteric impulses.

7. Tuesday, January 24 Dress Tech

Learned a lot tonight. I feel I hit some flow in my journey, with the character and internally. It's in the moments of sitting, reading the newspaper, or listening to others when the work can be activated on my feet. Allows me to dive into speaking.

Having the show be a huge mess is a blessing, in a way. It takes the pressure off of nailing it and allows me to stay in my process. Yes, I hoped this would be a polished piece, but it reflects the play, the deterioration of the world we're inhabiting. Stay in the process, Matthew!

8. Thursday, January 26 Opening Day/Show One

All things considered, today was a rather calm day. My mom is staying with me so having coffee in the morning with her was a nice change. Had a coaching session with David Smukler, which is always interesting. Lunch at Nordstrom's with the family and then off to campus. I decided to read my research document and see where I'm at in the work. I'm happy that I achieved what I set out to do while in rehearsal. Wholeness, readiness, and the permission to fall. There was a lovely accident of running into a studio where mediation practice was happening and was able to sit for 20 minutes and clear my mind, centre my breath, and open my pelvic floor. Something amazing happened. As I was aligning internally, the sensation of a cannon went off in my pelvis, BOOM! and I started to crumble. Moments later, boom, boom, boom, and I ultimately released and lost all sense of a tall spine. I stayed in it, didn't correct it, and when the breath allowed me, I aligned the vertebra one by one. And then it happened again! A flow of sensation throughout my body. Talk about a pre-show crumble!

At the studio, while last minute notes and teching were going on, I made it my intention to stay in the body and on the breath. I wasn't nervous but when my heart started to beat fast and got the blood pumping, I scanned, scanned, scanned. Lifting the archway alignment helps flow that energy down and out, and I made sure to pay attention and move it from riding high in my body. This happened moments before the house lights went down. As that transition happened, it was like all switches were flicked on and I made a commitment to dive in and fall. The first and second act seemed to go by smoothly. My ASL signing was on point, and I felt like I was delivering with unconscious competence. Act 3 was alright; I feel like I could use a bit of a kick-start into the piece. I find that, while waiting to go on, I couldn't conjure specific images to help me drop in. Perhaps there was a nervous energy that blocked the flow? Once in the monologue, I felt I had some moments of release. Erika mentions to bring in the external to fall. Be in conflict, engage and release. Staying on voice and allowing the breath image journey is essential. Don't push, but lean in and enjoy the fall. Act 4 had some few line mishaps, but for the detachment state I'm in and the need to dismiss and deflect the reality of the situation, I feel like I stayed in the work.

There wasn't so much of a post-show release other than a sign of relief that it all happened. I don't think I reached ecstasy in the show, and curious if I kinesthetically transferred?

9. Friday, January 27/Show Two

What an evening can do in releasing what had just happened and arriving in a state of readiness. My prep time was less but focused. I know how to hit the marks

physically, and my ability to drop in internally is becoming more and more available. Yoga warm up, prana warm up, a breath of fire and meditation. In the show, there was an ease finding internal life, continuous scanning and releasing of the body. ASL flowed well. Act 3 felt grounded but with a gentle release. Entering, I imaged taking a dive and living in that high-pressure zone of not knowing if I'll reach the surface. Act 4 was the highlight for me; I feel like I fell into his plight and vacancy to truly reveal the heart and vulnerability. Overall, seemed rooted in instinct and responsiveness to behaviour. Every time we run it I find the little transitions, threads, and gestures that allow me to align and hook up. The journey this man goes through is heartbreaking, and I'm emotionally, mentally, and even physically exhausted.

10. Saturday, January 28/Show Three

It happened again today. During meditation, I experienced the pelvic cannon release -- so thrilling! I think the chain reaction and the surrender imaging the pelvis crumbling is a teachable action, which excites me! Tanja spoke about not sitting back and being loose/comfortable on stage. Yes, that takes a lot of training and work, but that's not this play. Lean into it and feel the tension, let the drama of the play unfold, be ahead, find the thoughts faster. Post Act 3, as loose and grounded I have been, it's the final pass, and that pressure snuck up on me. Emotionally wrenching, aimed to find release but the work got away from me. Was I grounded? Did I unleash the beast? Did I see my scene partners or was I too busy in the work? After this performance, I sense that I found the legs of this character. The shifts in Chebutykin's behavior and the deterioration of his impulses became apparent. I put so much focus on the third act that the fourth act crept up on me and is the meat of the character's journey. His truth comes alive and is vulnerable, straightforward and direct. That's the fall I've been searching for. To drive the action, lean into it with quiet conviction, and to leave it all out on the floor. I arrived at the carnival, and I played well.

5.1 River Explorations

River One: What is it I seek? Chebutykin

Woah! What a fascinating exploration today. This is my first river after being in rehearsal for a week, and the internal life present and available is exciting and dangerous. The first image I conjured was a library. I started in a library, books upon books but I was unable to touch, read, or investigate. I became the pages turning with no comprehension until they were torn out and tattered. The mother came into my world, and I yearned for her connection. She remained on the horizon, and the shadow of another man swept her away. I felt a great loss and need to moan. My breath got shallow, and my throat dried up. Irina came to play, and I was embodied with joy and rhythmic pulses. I began to sign to her, "my beautiful white bird, my child, that day you were born... your mother, I love her," and the impulses to share came from the gut and extended through my fingertips. My blood was pulsing, and pleasure flushed my body. Joyous dancing and movement play and admiration. A moment of imaging a clip or edge and balancing/falling over became an obstacle. "What's the difference" started to fly out of my mouth. I found some interesting/compelling character body shapes of a man with a diseased liver. The pain, the shrivelled nature of the organ, and the effects on the body, breath. I was hunched over, quite demented yet determined to survive and move forward. Through this pain came laughter; joy was rising from the darkness. My throat became dry again, and the openness of the breath channel allowed me to experience the laugh without inhibition. It is push-pull, engage-release, swing-action happening in this man.

River Two: What is it I seek? Loneliness + Time

On the horizon, from the hunker, I was dropped into a snowy, desolate countryside. It was quite freezing and I was completely alone. The sound of silence. As I reached out, I could touch the snowy caps of the hillside. Through this gesture, my hands began to unravel. The pages of a book came back, being torn out and the sight of the library got smaller and smaller. I ended up on my back, trapped what seemed to be inside an empty bottle of alcohol. There was a cork on top. Trapped inside, I could see a distorted world on the outside. It was the essence of the Prozorov household with muffled sounds of chatter. I tried to move the bottle, side to side, and eventually toppled the bottle over and it began to roll. Rolling. It smashed, and the hundreds of glass shards went everywhere, like a ripple of cutting off my skin and deflecting into the air. This created a whole body sensation, specifically in the liver, that felt trapped and suffocating. I found myself in a character body hunched over to the side and depleted of any energy source. There was a sense of loss and longing for a body I once knew. Handicap. But, there was a fight to move forward, to survive. And then this sensation of vines growing inside and out of my body started to lift me up, align my spine, and support the pain. It was as if my arteries and veins went on overdrive and brought me back to life. The turbulence in my body and the motion of the capillaries connecting and intertwining lifted me right

up and allowed me to suspend and glide. From there, I went back into the hunker. Changed my focus, my intention, what I was seeking and TIME began its journey. From the perineum, I lifted up, with outstretched arms and broke through the portal or the stratosphere that time control us. I was floating in a space that stretched me side to side. I felt my whole body split into two and gained like an inch of matter. It felt expansive and extremely malleable. Springy. This is where Chebutykin lives when he is drunk. He enters this existential portal of free-thinking and freedom. His thoughts emerged from the depths of his being, deep from his subconscious, and vibrated throughout his whole body. I hunkered down and released it all.

River Three: What is it I seek? "The one I let die."

Trapped. Floor boards. Sunken. Depleted. Scratching to survive; pounding to be heard. I laid there and listened to noise from the room below. Brought me back to TBT work in journal. The sense of idleness allowing life to happen, pass by, experience and not taking part. Not making a choice to join the movement forward. Isolation. Breath shifted. Short/Shallow. Waiting for a moment to drop below. I saw the space Chebutykin enters in his illusion. Theatrical, glorious, clouds parting with beautiful sun rays pouring through. Almost oil painting quality. And then I heard the calling. Ta rara boom de ay. It's his escape. His plea within telling him to release, let go, detach. Either from the days he went to the Hermitage with the mother or perhaps a sense of illusion he longs to have or achieve. Flip. Let go of sentimentality, preciousness. Extromuscular. I began to float; my body began to move through space like hot air. The joints connecting but no work needed to breathe. All one channel.

There was a need, a call, to wail. Connecting voice with these images and needs. Conjured body shakes and an unconscious need to shake the system. Opposite of paralysis. Convulsion-like. Upper chest inhibited release, and the flow of energy vibrated throughout my body. It was like the perineum, or pelvic floor was opening to the environment, and I released my body into a new state of being. Shedding. Detachment. Keep moving the images out. Resist the need to go naval and inward, express the image thoroughly and respond with authentic behaviour. Be seen. Be heard.

River Four: What is it I seek? Detachment + Direct

Peculating. Buzzing. Steaming. The conditions of water, steam, heat about to boil over. Trapped under a lid waiting to release. The swirls of energy force the fluidity of particles. Release. Undo. Environment changes. Extreme sensations from the gut flushing out, radiating life force beyond limitations. Outcome distortion. Broken doll like gestures, detaching from body and free association of movement. Limitless. I seek what is detached. I yearn for ease of release. My skin began to creep and peel and slide off my body. A shedding of layers. Now start. Always been there, now revealed. The breath, like a swooping dragon, I begin to sense my new state of being. Where can I find the release in my pelvis? Where is the new breath source coming

from? I continue to seek, and the self-drops in. It's the practice of being and being seen. To reveal and not to push.

I hunkered into a new river. One exploring, direct. What is it I seek? What does my heart desire? The rigidity of movement. A need to layer upon layer of things to unfold. A pull from my beard lead me to a new space. To be direct yet with little or no care. I get that for free. Speak truth. Stomp Stomp. Suzuki breath and stomps took over. Ease and rigidity combined. Internal markers of defiance coming on as breath direct and focused.

River Five: What is it I seek? Animal + Release

The journey continues. A flying bird, owl-like inquisitive yet precise in movement. The growth of wings and ability to soar through the air. I found moments of fight and conflict within this image life. Inner torment and accepting capabilities of flight, to help, to next. I came to a cliff and questioned the risk. I dove and became the pressure in the water, the rush of sensation surging through my body, the struggle to come out of the other side. Will I survive? Will I be saved? Upon riding the crest of the water I inhaled new breath, energy source flowed throughout. Radiant and energetic body. Went into release, scanning of the body to seek pain and pleasure, senses alive, breath, blood, gravity, awareness of two spots of sharp pain and a tingly sensation in my feet. Feel sensation, breath it in and let it go. It's all in process. ALWAYS IN PROCESS.

5.2 Working Script Image 1

division. skills. heroic. service
AVR failed. //
 → flaw!!
 helplessness (*)(*)(*
 outlook to
 cope. →
 helplessness

notational service.

Zasyp: poor community, he me a gl?

ACT III

OLGA. What?

KULYGIN. The Doctor's been on a bender, he's a little worse for wear. Unfortunately. As if he'd done it on purpose. [Gets up.] There, it looks like he's coming.... Can you hear? Yes, he's coming... [Laughs.] He is such a ... I'm going to hide. [Walks toward the closet and stands in the corner.] He's a holy terror.

OLGA. He hasn't had a drop in two years, and now all of a sudden he decides to get roaring drunk... [Goes to the far end of the room with NATASHA.]

Enter CHEBUTYKIN; he walks across the room not staggering, as if he were sober; stops, looks, then approaches the washbasin and starts to wash his hands.

CHEBUTYKIN [gloomily]. To hell with them all... goddamn it... They think I'm a doctor, I'm supposed to know how to cure people, but I don't know a goddamn thing. Not a goddamn thing. It's all forgotten, nothing left of it.

Exit OLGA and NATASHA unnoticed by him.

To hell with them. All of them. Last Wednesday I treated a woman in Zasyp - she died, and it's all my fault. Yes ... I used to know something, about twenty-five years ago. But now it's all gone. My mind's a blank. Empty. Maybe I'm not even a human being any more. Maybe I just think I have legs,

unpacks self-louthing
 woman bleeding out in front of me

• manage how
 you say.
 to feel better.
 trap + falling
 in to despair.

Talking / confession
 to the mother
 to help → solve
 up.
 → prepping for
 surgery?

(* internally
 scan HVK
 don't go natural's

expansion
 of
 rings.

to absolve.

AVOIDANCE — seeking a place in
 [of help, service house, not to be found.
 sober acts] upstairs corner room.

Working Script Image 2

gum let.
false
being something you're not

softening / tormented

THREE SISTERS

/smother/ hands, a head; maybe I don't really exist,
/brave/ and I only think that I walk, eat, sleep.
/reflect/ [Weeps.] Oh, if only. If only I really didn't
/torment/ exist! [Stops crying, gloomily.] God knows...
/disenchant/ The other day there was a conversation go-
/fade dissolve/ ing on at the club - they were talking about
Shakespeare, Voltaire... I've never read any
of it, not a single line, but I sat there with
this expression on my face, looking as if I
had. The same with the others. Disgusting.
And then I thought of that woman, the one
I let die ... and it all came back to me, my
stomach knotted up, I wanted to retch....
So instead I got drunk...

Enter IRINA, VERSHININ and TUZENBACH. TUZENBACH is wearing a new, fashionable civilian suit.

IRINA. Let's sit down. No one will come in here.

VERSHININ. If it hadn't been for the soldiers, the whole town would have burned down. Good men! [Rubs his hands with pleasure.] The salt of the earth! Excellent fellows!

KULYGIN [approaching them]. What is the time, if you please?

TUZENBACH. Past three, already. It's getting light.

IRINA. Everyone is sitting in the dining-room, nobody's leaving. Your friend Solyony is there... [To CHEBUTYKIN.] You'd better go to bed, doctor.

THUS

76

State of Being:
ability / agility
to flip / switch /
pivot on the thought.

shift to mirror SL
mockery of those in
club, expression.

shift in body;
not as quiet
back to cover-up.
"Soker"

⊛ ⊛ ⊛
Shining the
heart center
light of
hatred, dismay,
SHAME
in to others.

Working Script Image 3

he has capacity to change → but doesn't... smashes

THREE SISTERS

Mind you, what do I know. It could be fine. Our principal, I have to say, is a good man, he's a very good man, and a superior intellect, but he does have certain - ideas and opinions.... Not that it's any of his business, but anyway, if you want, I could probably speak to him...

CHEBUTYKIN picks up a china clock and looks at it.

VERSHININ. I got filthy at the fire. I must look like some creature from the underworld.

Pause.

*TUBENBACH TRANSLATES FOR IRINA Yesterday, I caught wind that they want to transfer our brigade somewhere far away. Poland, maybe - or possibly even Siberia.

TUZENBACH. Yes, I've heard that, too. What will happen then? The town will be deserted.

IRINA. But we'll have moved too!

CHEBUTYKIN [drops the clock, smashing it]. Smithereens!

Pause; everyone is upset and embarrassed.

KULYGIN [collecting pieces]. To break such an expensive thing - ah, Ivan Romanych, Ivan Romanych! F-minus for conduct!

IRINA. That's mama's clock.

cheb. 78 smashes clock

appropriate behaviour.

betrayal / hypocrisy

intimate/objective

pure

expression of cynicism


violent actions - those around.

→ under uttling dreams, "Museum"

existential breakthrough:

relapse of mother memories, loneliness, avoidance of reality, illusion otherworldly.

breaking thru portal of stratosphere



Working Script Image 4

challenge what we want
watching others suffer.
subtle changes that break worlds apart.
adaptation.

initiating strategies to change but don't succeed.

- deflecting.
- showing blame lies in the audience.
- pulling wool from eyes.

existential break through

ACT III

CHERBUTYKIN. What if it is, what if it is... So it was mama's. Well, maybe I didn't break it, maybe it only seems that I've broken it. Maybe it only seems to us that we exist, but in reality we don't. I don't know, nobody knows. [At the door.] What are you staring at? Natasha is having it off with Protopopov, but you don't see that... You sit here and see nothing, but Natasha is having it off with Protopopov... [Sings.] Would you care for a fig, mademoiselle... [Exit.]

VERSHEVIN. Yes... [Laughs.] So strange, all of this!

Pause.

When the fire started, I ran straight home. When I got near, I could see that our house was fine, in no danger, but there on the front step in their nighties were my two girls, their mother nowhere to be seen, people rushing everywhere, horses and dogs running amok, and the look of terror on my girls' faces, the look of imploring. It wrung my heart, you know, to see those little faces looking up at me. My God, I thought, what else will these girls have to witness in their long life! I picked them up and ran, and I kept asking myself: what else will they have to witness in this world!

Fire bells; pause.

ONE OCCASION WHERE CHECKOV MIGHT JOIN IRINA WITH A SCRIPT TO FOLLOW ALONG 79

That's mama's. Break, maybe not me. Maybe seem me broke it. Seem we here, maybe really, not.

Natasha, Protopopov
fighting
kissing

fig
"please eat this date at my behest..."
words from an operetta once put on at the Hermitage Theatre.

* fig represents what?
sensuality in these last moments.
extremely awkward forward disrespectful to Irina, only female in room.
mother desires?

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APPENDIX A: Documenting Fall and Release during a 30-Day Yoga Challenge; My Yoga Journal

Day 1: 3/31, 2016 Blood/Breath/Gravity/Pain/Pleasure awareness in Savasana Pelvic floor/hip locked on left rotation Left ankle weak Release limbs/parts not engaged	Day 10: 4/9, 2016 Sequence Repetition Spoke wrong cue, cross legs like a lady → Wild Thing
Day 2: 4/1, 2016 Interoceptive cues Pelvis release Mindful practice	Day 11: 4/10, 2016 Reverse child's pose → Knee up and hook, twist to mat Intense sequence; hip openers
Day 3: 4/2, 2016 Active practice; good energy BBGPP	Day 12: 4/11, 2016 High flow; belly heartthrob Left hip extension; forearm sensations Protective mind chatter: conferences
Day 4: 4/3, 2016 Less awareness; more physical Side Arm Balance! → Fly Releasing exhale full, incoming breath (calming of nervous system)	Day 13: 4/12, 2016 Silent meditation Yoga + Stanislavski India Wanderlust
Day 5: 4/4, 2016 Solid practice Breath awareness Pelvis leveling Slow down transitions	Day 14: 4/13, 2016
Day 6: 4/5, 2016 Silent Practice Lots of mind chatter!! Were the breath and inward focus? Body tired	Day 15: 4/14, 2016
Day 7: 4/6, 2016 Steady flow Tired body Right shoulder achy	Day 16: 4/15, 2016 Karma class Body warm and released
Day 8: 4/6, 2016 RELEASE IN SAVASANA; transition Dropped into Cleopatra imagery Full body release and stillness B B G P P	Day 17: 4/16, 2016 Moksha flow
Day 9: 4/8, 2016 Mindfulness Practice Basic technique; Square Hips Rotate from hip socket → Not using legs/glutes to manufacture	Day 18: 4/17, 2016 Self-love is creating and acknowledging boundaries Fierce ashtanga practice Breath. Fire. Sweat.
	Day 19: 4/18, 2016 Early morning flow Reminder of Vera at wall with block Skin like leather
	Day 20: 4/19, 2016 Strong breath connection Pelvis vibrations; Internal scan

Day 21: 4/20, 2016

Jock Yoga
Overworked flow
Exteroceptive practice
Ego driven

Day 22: 4/21, 2016

Deep practice
Internal twisting/lengthening
Release in transition

Day 23: 4/22, 2016

Calm senses
Sacrum press down
→ lengthens back of skull
Supported Pigeon

Day 24: 4/23, 2016, Heart Yoga

Intelligence is the foundation
What brought you to this room?
Spreading of toes: Inner arch LIFT!

Day 25: 4/24, 2016, Heart Yoga

Archway Connection:
Inner arch → Pelvis →
Diaphragm → Soft Palate
Pelvis Diagram [OO]
Restorative hips

Day 26: 4/25, 2016

Constricted breath
Heartbeat in upper chest
Lost lower body

Day 27: 4/26, 2016

Breath in pelvic bowl
Vibrations in thighs
Sacrum release/snake imagery

Day 28: 4/27, 2016

Internal fall while releasing UP
Tight skin, leather
Pain/Fatigue

Day 29: 4/28, 2016

Strong practice
Internal sensations
BBGPP

Day 30: 4/29, 2016

Expectations of finishing?
Deeper breath
Quiet the mind/Reflect
Gratitude of body
R knee snap in Vrksasana

APPENDIX B:

May 2 – May 11, 2016

The following section displays examples and documentation of my experiences internally falling and journal entries from my time at Erika Batdorf's Spring Intensive.

Journal 1: 5/02

Well, the savasana release work from my yoga challenge is definitely in process. I can't get out Karuna's image work of the archways. Wow! Opened up a whole new channel of energy flow and release. From the arches, pelvis, diaphragm, to the soft palate. Significant development. I felt the pulsing of blood in my lips and vibrations throughout the body. Be messy. Breathe the inner container! Erika's side coaching of releasing jaw bone/muscle in full tandem relationship to the pelvis. Undo Undo Undo. Scanned for numbness in left leg and thighs. Awaken the body. Solo idea: loss of structure, see me panic or work through presentation in a messy way.

Kinesthetically Transferring through the Autonomic Nervous System

Journal 2: 5/02 PM (Afternoon session)

Maybe because it's been a few weeks since I've done a TBT warm-up but the sensation memory and gateway in seems to be open and fresh. The energy of the room has a lot to do with the freedom of exploration. States: dome feeling in my pelvis that created a lofty bouncy quality (round) moving it through the body it landed in my nasal cavity, which created this buzzing sensation that I explored. The way it shifted my body, my breath and hooked up energy. It turned into a 1-10 state of bird-like cockatoo pitches. Not nasal but living in high resonators. Established from my open pelvis. When I released my pelvis in savasana, I hooked back up, scanned, and a cold wave of emotion ran over. I revealed my vulnerability as I began to see others, as well as be seen while staying open in this sensation. At one point, I yelled, "I'm not alone!" Shifting in the space, I ran into someone and immediately felt guilt and shame and expectations dropped. This feeling of disappointment brought a full body release of sadness and pain. Grief. I made a connection with someone's foot, and even that small amount of human touch compelled me to emote and feel.

I felt emotional, and body hooked up when sitting with knees up. Just still. In the room. Only when I was compelled or had an impulse to move/explode then it can happen otherwise, can you sustain it in a walk across the room for example?

Journal 3: 5/3

Juggling. Allowing. Permission to multitask the things that are important. What's important vs. what's necessary or urgent. The internal awareness of letting my body lead the way. NO plan. No expectations but the subtle realization that I am not actually in control. There's a force guiding me through the work, through life and I just need to be awake and supple and in tune to let it take over. Believe. Taking time to hone in on what my imagination can bring; allow the sensation and feeling ignite and transport me to a world of full belief in myself. No judgments. Ask questions. Dig deeper than surface realizations or ideas. Something's cooking inside, and my job is to unleash and de-clutter the excess to strike the diamond within.

Pelvic Bowl Color → ORANGE: ignite. Skin. Fire. Pilot Lite. What trigger. Flames. Guilt. Fear. Loneliness. Denial. Trust. Arteries on fire. Burning within. Deep burn. Inferno. Oxygen. Sustain. Breath. Light. Life. Reborn. Rejuvenate. Toxic. Simmer. Vibrating. Crackling. Dimmer. Orange light. Intense. Recover. Campfire. Explosion. Burn. Sizzle. Depressed. Worthless. Power. Ability to break through. Pit. Stomach. Pelvis. Kerplunk. Drop. Lift. Arch. Soft palate.

I questioned, "If my pelvis fell from under me...will I survive?" Can I be my pillar of strength and yet pick myself up when I fall? To be messy inside calms the storm on the out. To feel the expansiveness of my pelvic floor fill and release with air seems transcendent at times. After the pelvis release, falling, and circling on the floor explorations, there appeared to be a bubble sensation, like a

membrane of air to breathe into, which felt freeing. We started to fall in our head, fingers pressed on the top of our nose, falling forward and this cobra like images began to enter my consciousness. Every time I fell, the snake's crown got bigger and bigger. With the sacrum release happening. I'm not surprised that this image came up. It was scary, but I'm embracing the snake within. Falling again the wall. Trust. Toddler. Drop. Release. Floor Floor Floor. Gravity. I feel light, airy, yet weighted. Present but lifted.

My right quad/thigh work up. There's a sensation I've never felt before after the work.

Monologue Coaching with Batdorf:

Embody a truck driver → Pelvis drop, autonomic differences. Skin, muscle. The emotional brain is coming through without organizing. I am falling into disorganization.

Journal 4: 5/4 PM

"EW."

Through exploration of the sound "ew" and body release, my anus took over. I was able to contract and release the sphincter while staying hooked up. I think. Before that, in the warm-up, I had a lot of negative thoughts streaming through my mind. Good enough, Why am I here, etc. And with my pelvic floor opening, I was able to respond to my emotional brain. My belly brain. Wow! (Excited to read about that) My intention for the work was to roll right. I found pleasure, through the pain. Not a direct root but that was fun to tap into that. When something excited me, I responded authentically. I didn't feel pushed or forced. Which probably means I was, lol.

Touch and Go: "EW" open vowel, anus, and pleasure.

Journal 5: 5/6

Some beautiful and scary moments this morning. It started with the release of my hip flexor. That sensation on expansion as my muscles released felt like a universe opening up yet magnified and vibrating within one another. With all the other subtle muscle movements we did with Matthew Romantini, an associate at TBT, I had a lot of anger built up inside. Frustration. Fear. It was pulsing throughout, and I couldn't shake it. Had an impulse to bang it out but I wanted to make sure to stay released and fluid through the impulse. It shook me, and I needed some breathing room. On the other hand, I put that energy out while maintaining the internal work. With the butoh walks, that delicate balance of universe expansion started to unravel within my body and pelvis. The image of a shattered pelvis hooks me up and releases the pelvic floor. For me, feels like an open floodgate. My perineum was wide open. Adding the flower scent, a daffodil, I sourced my sensations while crumbling within. Some major areas that resonated within; pelvis, sternum, sacrum, occipital bone.

Once I removed those out of my control, all I had was the flower leading me through. My body unraveled like petals in the air. The flowed like stems bouncing in a field. As I've built my body, it was a crown, flower chain of daffodils. Large fluid gathering at my pelvis, the stems lengthening and connecting my major support areas. I revealed in this sensation on an fff sound, and my body responded and found some organic range of motion and I followed my impulses. Finding full release, I felt again my hip flexors flow back into that universe, and every time it opened up, a single flower was floating in the wind. Nurture it. Sustain it. Heal it. My pelvis bloomed today. It discovered my pelvis' fluidity and embraced it's delicate and fragile softness. Beneath the surface; this is where my risk is!!

The continued question of why I'm here. Is it an ego thing? Something I think I need. I know I'm growing and the prof's feedback is supposed to vice, ruffle, and make me think – gah!

Journal 6: 5/6 PM

I think emotional brain exhaustion has kicked in. Going through the motions and finding not only release but also growth with the body. We talked about rebounding action, like in yoga, regarding finding gravity. I sense that happening and I felt moments of chemistry in "Elbow," "Night and Day," "and "Bad." Finally, I felt sensation in my inner legs!! I was relieved, and I tried to keep sending the energy out. Out. Out. Always on the other person. That became tough when finding a connection with a partner. Back to authenticity, following impulses. Letting go of the voices in my head and responding to the sensation. Like Meisner, behaviour. As soon as I scanned solo, my release came back, and body led the exploration. Keep it fluid. Keep it moving out. Keep it TBT.

Journal 7: 5/11 PM

A contracting feeling of the lungs is shivering and sending chills up my throat to activate my front lips on teeth. What is creating this and why is this happening? It feels trapped and confined and the need to find release in the sternum. Holding the exhale and navigating through this area sent chills throughout the body. Images of a cold blood stream. Prison. Entrapment. Sickness. Like a sixth sense. Something is wrong inside there is a troop of cells taking over my respiratory system; my breath; my life. When I released it, I felt pleasure in watching the ladies scream and interact with each other. When they were rolling on the floor and, better yet, screaming to stop. I became aroused and sensually stimulated my body. The image of truck driver came back. Unravel. Uncontrolled. Risk the different facets of my inner body. The idea of a crumbling pelvis while feeling this constriction of lung space is complicated to juggle. My body heat rose, and I was in unfamiliar territory. In the warm up, "Come Talk to Me," I broke the rules and felt blood, breath, gravity again, I went to the pelvis, and my movements were subtle and released – not overworked. As a result, I created new sensation hook up.

Journal 8: 5/12 PM

Where am I today? Energy felt alive, open, and sensual. Coming from prep apt, my sexual drive and elation of my status, internally, let me drop into my present sensuality. I still find it hard to kinesthetic transfer or hook up while in-group contact. I maintain all Blood, Breath, Gravity, Pain, Pleasure, etc. and I feel like in "Night and Day" I released something huge. The idea of fear or the need to look good and I used the energy of my legs and feet to create an unstable yet fluid upper body.

In the short journey, I focused on Blood. I let the sensations of blood and skin lead the movement. I felt grounded yet floating on air in the clouds. I became seaweed in the ocean. Every tingle, buzz, impulse led my body in whatever direction.

State 1: Table top and breathing until chest explosion recreating that sensation my respiratory system is going through that sends the tingles into my front teeth. Not fully exploring it lead to entrapment as the sternum. Try to escape. Digging and claustrophobic. I explored staying in the top of inhaling and bottom of exhaling. That's where I discovered the gateways. I remember digging the floor away and trying to burst through my sternum.

State 2: Monkey business anus EWW release. Intent to swing Right and find pleasure rolling around in happy baby opening perineum and releasing pelvic floor. Lots of laughter and upper register EWWing. I found it incredibly funny when people looked so solemn in their movement, trying to make connections, bizarre, and it made me howl. Kind of an outside eye took over and gagged at what we're doing. If felt it vibrating throughout my body.

State 3: Orange, fire, pelvis. Contract/release, contract/release until my blood was on fire. High body temperatures and a feeling of frying on the inside. Every time I breathed in oxygen, it fueled my state. Creating a furnace inside that festered and built up rage. I remember releasing all the way out and like a tremor yelled, "will you fucking shut up, fuck!" across the room. Release. Fire. Twitch. Up.

Release. Drop. Ignite. Lead me to couches and banged the rage out. I felt this state before... release or expectation.

Journal 9: 5/11

I think the idea of not over working in the warm-up is necessary. Should bring this idea into life. Listening to impulses and not over exerting energy I don't need. I get that for free. That allowed me to feel and scan today. "Come talk to me" went internal and small and in my timing but I felt the scanning and juggling happening throughout. Night and Day got me to a place of unbalance yet stable. The transition into the state runs was buoyant and wiggly. Felt like my pelvis was open and could fill the space in every direction.

State 1: Started at the wall and contracted/released to get my blood boiling and internal temperature high. Once I hit an absolute peak, I found release and began vocalizing during the modulations. There was a lot of, "why, how now, you wretched pig, cunt, you killed my brother, why?!" I had some interaction/confrontation with Zoe, and as soon as she started me that I was going to hit someone, I retreated in and panicked. Continued to bang it out on the couches.

State 2: Rolly Polly Monkey Pelvis was less laughy and jauntier and less filtered. Kept a wide stance and called out different things. I noticed that affected me. I discovered working from the anus and perineum is a place of impulse and inspiration. There were judgments in my mind, but I countered that by speaking thoughts and not giving a shit.

State 3: Hardest to trigger. Sternum, top/bottom of the breath. Break-through! Trapped. Through the release, found my ear to the ground and could hear music from underneath. The sound radiated throughout my body. Felt stuck. As if shot and still alive and could see others wounded or celebrating the noise was unbearable at times. Lots of changing rhythms in spine and breath is such an enjoyable experience. It's like bringing powerful sensory bodies on a journey, and I am in full control. From the haze and distorted space of the state, took a breath of air and stretch/yawn of release knowing you're about to enter another tunnel of intense sensory overload. As the train rides in the dark space, you either see the light at the end, the light fade away behind or your eyes soften and inside the tunnel itself become ALIVE.

APPENDIX C:

May 15 – June 11, 2016

Aligning breath, body and text during scene work at The Voice Intensive.

FIRST PASS:

I felt my heart too much on sleeve; stoic, containing internal rhythms

Started too choleric; bring in some sanguine and melancholic

Internal score: orange, fire, mineral.

Assuring Portia at the end will make her go out faster. Don't rush, BE CLEAR

FINAL SCENE:

After an emotional warm-up this morning, I felt hooked up in my interoceptive life, and my breath felt alive and present. In the moments before, I crouched down and balanced on my toes, closed my eyes and just allowed myself to fall. I imaged space

in my hip flexors, allowed my psoas to release, and my pelvis shattered. I was breathing in my back ribs. As we began the scene, what left? My body awareness? Breath? Internal scanning? Was I listening? Brutus keeps a solid front, not wearing

his heart on his sleeve, stoic in a way but must be internally on fire. I felt that energy in my blood and breath and I could feel the weight of my feet under me. In the moment of tending to the cut, it wasn't as smooth as we rehearsed so I had to deal with the new obstacles. I genuinely dropped in compassion with my final pleas to send her in.

Moments after, my breath was alive, and I was vibrating. My pelvis may still be tight, but my perineum was open and flowing.

APPENDIX D:
Exploring the Fall in Transcendence Theatre Company's production of *Dance The Night Away*.

Date	Pre-Show Crumble	Performance Falling	Post-Show Release
August 5, 2016	After company circle up, including four deep breaths, stood in parallel and internally scanned my body. Intention was to hook up interoceptive awareness, as well as find the lift/suspension of leg bone in hip socket to support a floating pelvic bowl.	Challenge was to open pelvic floor while in movement and connection with material. Ex: "Singing in the Rain" finding joy with tap, ease with umbrella, while releasing perineum.	Therapeutic rolling out of IT Bands and Quadriceps. 5 minutes of breath and sacrum release.
August 6, 2016	7-minute meditation of gratitude	Pure exploration of sacrum release and alignment of the spine while standing on stage.	Savasana and unraveled tension in body. Released lower body & occipital bone lengthening.
August 7, 2016	Parallel standing arch suspension/alignment while imaging whole body connection. Squat to stand initiated by perineum release.	While in relationship with my scene partner I scanned for an internal colour and where it radiated in my interoceptive awareness: Purple Haze. Imaged pelvis wrapped with grape vines & flowing on mountainside.	5-minute meditation focusing on synergy.
August 12, 2016	After warm-up, laid in savasana and scanned for B B G P P / Stretch & Yawn	Found ease in performance and deep connection with artists. Sacrum was vibrating, and I felt a combination of Earth/Air element	Quadrifold & investigated suspension of pelvic bowl.
August 13, 2016	Four deep breaths with intention on authentic behavior, dropping each breath into my swamp and releasing up warm air and images. Savasana, scanned for B B G P P / Stretch & Yawn	There was a moment in tonight's show when I found myself squatting in malasana and allowed my breath to drop into my pelvic bowl and release through my perineum. This opened an energetic channel for me, my sacrum fully let go and my pelvic floor was open and authentically vibrating when on stage.	5-minute meditation. Rolling out of IT muscles, glutes and hamstrings. My sacrum had a lot of sensations that I had to breathe into to cool down and fully release.
August 14, 2016	Internal scanning while in yoga practice. Dropping in images from lyrics and allowing them to vibrate in my body. Stretch & Yawn	Granted words used in warm up to take risk while in performance. Dare Greatly. Although in Exteroceptive movement, maintained interoceptive awareness. Pelvic floor and sacrum felt open and suspended.	End of week meditation. Gave myself time and permission to release the tensions and holding patterns from the week go. Lilac colour swept my body. Healing energy radiated throughout. Archway channel felt alive and engaged.
August 19, 2016	Warming my body after four days proved to be a challenge in finding the release needed to hook up. Executed my regular pre-show warm up, including body scan for sensation, as well as image & breath work.	Some performance anxiety kicked in at the top of the show which led to my pelvis and sacrum to tense. There was a disconnect from my two brains and my cranial brain took over to muscle through the moments. I gathered my energy and realigned my archway gateway to sink and crumble into my interoceptive awareness.	Quadrifold and meditation to hook up and crumble full body release. Lower body energy seems to be locked up.
August 20, 2016	My body felt tired today so I paid extra attention laying in Savasana and scanning my interoceptive awareness. I gather my lower body needed some care and focused my energy awakening these parts. I got to the point of vibration. Lots of stretches and yawning and animal	There were moments of Transcendence in this evening's performance. The collective energy from the cast, embracing each moment allowed me to release my pelvic floor and breath and align from my sacrum and archway gateway. Truly a magical night on stage.	Post show meditation and release of the energy created. Feeling of ecstasy and wholeness throughout my body. Perineum felt open and full.

movements.

August 21, 2016

Meditation of Gratitude. Physical warm up, including yoga. Scanning the body, interoceptive. awareness of pelvic floor and perineum. How can I find vulnerability in the work? Subtle, heart And belly brain breath connection.

I found there were moments in the show that I would lift my occipital bone and instinctively softened my sacrum and pelvic floor while in movement. The heart centre connection to my scene partner radiated throughout the show which allowed me to be vulnerable and emotionally available for my breath to drop in. Slight right leg calf detachment but experienced an overall full body wholeness.

Stretch and yawn release. Subtle breath alignment. Quadrifold, focusing on knees slightly open and shoulders down and out. I felt that the way I approached the material on stage comes across with ease and unconscious competence. Transcendence. These sensations lead me to believe I kinesthetically transferred an authentic and emotionally driven performance.

APPENDIX E: 26 Questions – Making it Specific (P. Lampert 2016)

1. How old am I?
2. Who are my ancestors?
3. What is my stock/class? Social, Economic, Religious
4. What is my breeding?
5. What position am I trained for?
6. What am I like physically?
7. What am I like mentally?
8. What are my strengths?
9. What are my weaknesses?
10. What do others think of me? Do I know?
11. What are my physical quirks?
12. What are my personal patterns of life?
13. What is my emotional range?
14. What is my basic action? (Main objective expressed as a verb)
15. What is/are my moment to moment objective/s?
16. Where am I going?
17. Where am I coming from?
18. What am I talking to? What is my relationship to them?
19. What do I want from them? How do I get it? Do they come through? (Did I win?) If not then what? (Changing tactics)
20. What is/are my physical preoccupations/s?
21. What happens physically to affect the action?
22. What has happened before?
23. What is about to happen?
24. Do I know that?
25. How much information do I have? Am I able to use it? (As character)
26. How much information do I have? Am I able to use it? (As actor)

5 LISTS

1. Events of the play
 2. Everything your character says about himself
 3. Everything your character says about other characters
 4. Everything other characters say about your character
 5. Any heightened language, punctuation, song, or poetry
-
- What kind of animal would your character be?
 - What are your character's super objectives?
 - What do you not know? Questions still unanswered?

APPENDIX F: ASL Gloss For Chebutykin Image 5

VID 1 ASL Translations for 'Chebutykin' – Matthew Rossoff

What is it, my child, my joy?

my child, my joy.... what? (eyebrows furrowed)

My own little white bird...

my little white bird

I won't, I won't...

I won't, I won't.

Ah-hah... They're calling me downstairs, there's someone there to see me. I'll be back in a minute...just wait...

Ah! Downstairs call me, someone here see me. one min, back will wait please. (pause a little) me (brief pause)

I'll be sixty soon. I'm an old man, a lonely, worthless old man... There's nothing good in me except for this love I have for you, and without you, I'd have died a long time ago... My darling, my sweet little girl, I've known you since the day you were born... I carried you in my arms... I loved your sainted mother...

soon age sixty. me old man. lonely, worth-none old man. inside me, nothing good. except for what? love for you. without you, me die long time ago. my sweetie, my little girl. that day you born, know you since. me hold you. your amazing mom, me love her.

Extravagant presents... Get out!

(2x) **Fancy gifts! Get out!**

VID 2

Anfisa { It's a colonel here to see you, children, a stranger! He's just taking off his coat, dears, and then he's coming here. Irinushka, you be nice to the man... Oh, for goodness sake, it's past time for lunch... goodness sake... (slow down)

inform you, Army superior leader here see you, strange man, now, coat take off finish, come here. Irina, man you must nice. arms-throw-up lunch, time past. (brief pause) Brief pause (brief pause) now

That's it... The lovesick major, that's me.

Right, that's me, me solider fall in love.

Nearly forty-three. Have you been away from Moscow long?

Soon age 43. Moscow, you away since?

ASL Gloss For Chebutykin Image 6

ASL Translations for 'Chebutykin' – Matthew Rossoff

I lived on Nemetskaya for a while. From Nemetskaya, I used to walk to the Kransy Barracks. There's a kind of dismal looking bridge on the way, water rushing underneath it. A lonely man can feel quite bereft standing there. But here, what a wide, splendid river! A splendid river!

Me live where? Nemetskaya for while. from there, walk to army area. on way, sort-of sad looking bridge, water flowing underneath. man lonely can depress bridge stand but wow, huge special river. amazing river!

(mouthed as 'cha')

Don't say it! Such a find, healthy Russian climate you have here. The forest, the river... and birch trees! Dear, humble birches, I love them more than any other tree. It must be so good to live here. The only odd thing is that the railway station is twenty miles away ... And nobody knows why.

comment don't! beautiful healthy Russian environment here. forest, river, birch trees. Precious humble birches, my favorite, me kissfist. live here, seem good. one odd thing what? railway station far. why? don't know.

11d3 I knew your mother.

you mom, me know her.

She was a good woman. God rest her soul.

Good woman. her soul rest.

Irina! Over here, please. I can't manage life without you.

Irina, come, please. Life without you, cant.

Difficult, mysterious, and happy. And in a thousand years human beings will still be sighing and saying: "Al, Life is so hard!" – and they'll still be just as afraid of death and make every effort to avoid it.

difficult. mystery happy. 1000 years later, humans still say, sigh life whoa hard! death still scare, goal life long.

(point)

But one thing I have learned, on thing I'm sure of. And how I wish I could make you see that real happiness isn't possible.

finish learn, finish know, wish show you real happiness, possible not.

Balzac was married in Berdichev.

Balzac married where? Berdichev.

ASL Gloss For Chebutykin Image 7

ASL Translations for 'Chebutykin' – Matthew Rossoff

Me? I'm thirty-two

~~Me? Age 32.~~

No they're not. Look, *the eight turned up on the two of spades*. It means you won't get to Moscow.

~~wont. understand, 2 of spades card, ontop, 8, Moscow, arrive wont.~~

If that baby were mine, I'd fry him in a frying pan and eat him.

baby mine, baby cook baby eat.

~~Don't touch her, don't touch...~~

~~**Touch her, don't! touch don't!**~~

And there was real Caucasian food too: onion soup, and for the meat course – chekhartma.

Have real white food too. Onion soup. Meat, what kind? chekhartma.

It's time we were going. Take care.

Chek-hart-ma

Time go, bye care!

That's alright ma'am... Many thanks, ma'am

~~lady, alright, lady, thank-thank-you.~~

via 4 So it was mama's. Well, maybe I didn't break it, maybe it only seems that I've broken it. Maybe it only seems to us that we exist, but in reality we don't.

~~That mama's Break, maybe not me. maybe seem me broke it, seem we here, maybe really, not.~~

Natasha is having it off with Protopopov.

2 them
Natasha, Protopopov fighting.

They forgot to say good-bye to me.

Goodbye, they forgot.

Well, yes, I forgot too. Anyway, I'll see them soon, I'm leaving tomorrow. Yes... One more day left. In a year they'll give me my discharge, I'll come back here and live out

ASL Gloss For Chebutykin Image 8

ASL Translations for 'Chebutykin' – Matthew Rossoff

my life beside you...Only one more year till I get my pension... I'll come back here to you and lead a completely different life... I'll be so nice and respectable. **Pious.**
Quiet.

Yes. Me forgot same. anyway, see them soon will. tomorrow me leave. one day left. one year, waive will. back here will. life from-now-on, next you. one year, pension will get. back here with you, life different from now on. me nice, me respect. me quiet.

I know. I know.
Know. Know.

What happened? Nothing. Nothing important.

Happen what? Nothing^{offt} Important, not.

My sweet little girl, my dear child...treasure...You're so far ahead of me, I can't keep up. I'm left behind, like an old gander that's too feeble to fly south. Fly away, my darling, fly away and may God give you joy!

My sweet little girl, my precious child. you ahead me. catch up cant. me behind, me old bird weak fly south. fly away, sweetie, fly away... find joy.

It's nonsense.

Search C8

make sense none: *not*
u)

Our headmistress is here!

school superior here!

~
The Baron has just been killed in a duel...

fight, baron recently killed:

stabbed, dead

*This being human is a guest house
Every morning a new arrival.
A joy, a depression, meanness
Some momentary awareness comes as an unexpected visitor.
Welcome and entertain them all
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,
Who violently sweep your house empty of its furniture.
Still, treat each guest honorably.
He may be clearing you out for some new delight.
The dark thought, the shame, the malice,
Meet them at the door, laughing; and invite them in.
Be grateful for whoever comes,
Because each has been sent as a guide from beyond.*

~ Rumi